

**THE
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CONTENTS

ESSAYS

FIRST FIGHT by R. T. Smith with illustrations by Erik Johnson	2
DROPPING OUT by Russ Gurley with illustration by Marty Joseph	8
NOW IS THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT by Elizabeth Gregory with illustrations by Fredda Berlin	28
BEING GAY AT AUBURN by Bob Williams with illustration by Cindy Braun	52

FICTION

SCENES INSIDE THE GOLDMINE by Kellie Hobbs with illustration by Karen Rouse	14
MR. SHAPIRO MEETS FATE by John DeKonty with illustration by Susan R. Perry	18
ME & JIMMY by Dave York with illustration by Harry Ankeny	24
LOVE, SEX, AND THE CRISIS OF IMPECUNIOSITY by Anonymous with illustration by Michael R. Plante	36
A BETRAYAL by Hank Raulerson	44
THE WAITRESS AND THE CIRCUS-WOMAN by Marian Motley-Carcache with illustration by Agnes Taugner	48
CRICKETS by Stanley Sheley with illustration by Liz Phythyon	56

ARTICLES

ROMANCE & HORROR by David Benson	12
GAME TABLE EARTH by William David Hartshorn	32

POETRY

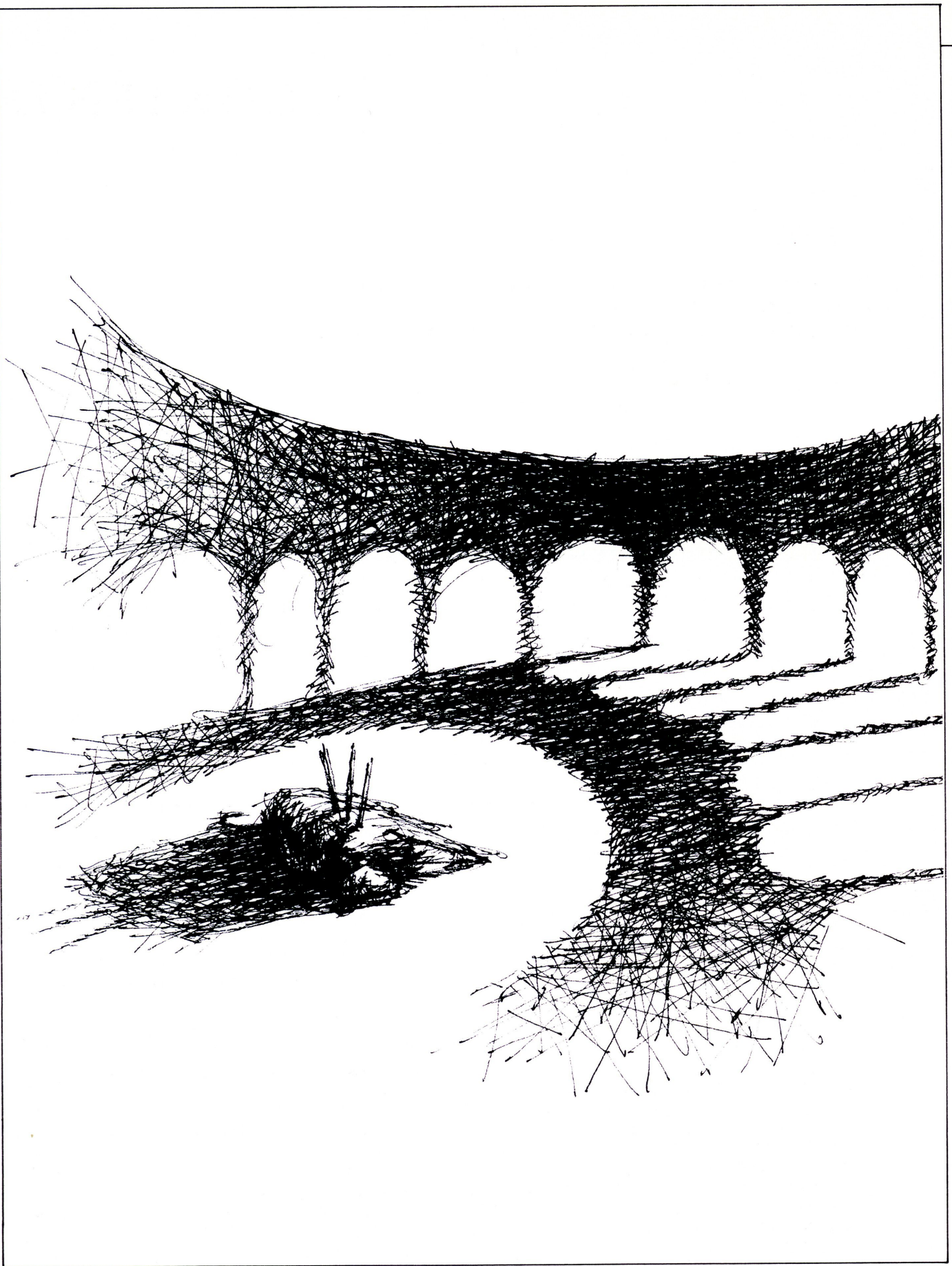
DRIVING ON BACKROADS by David Scott Ward	7
THE EXILE by Joseph Harrison	7
LINGERING HERE by Kellie Hobbs	10
UNTITLED by Jody Kamins	16
A DAY BY THE POND by David Scott Ward	17
KINETIC SCULPTURE by Peter Button	23
A SHORT INVENTION by Laura A. Wright	27
A WOMAN WRITING by Joseph Harrison	27
BY THE SEA by R. T. Smith	31
YESTERDAY'S HERO by Gwen Wilson	35
TO YOU WE WILL NOT SAY GOODBYE by Jim Allen	41
RIPENESS IS ALL by Anonymous	42
UNTITLED by Francis Ginanni	46

TWO THE BROW

by William David Hartshorn	47
IMAGES FOUND RIDING by Gary Parker	47
UNTITLED by Bill Meredith	54
MORNING by Margaret Renkl	55

ART

Photograph by Cynthia Braun	6
Print by Marty Joseph	7
Print by Vann Baker	11
Drawing by Matt McClendon	13
Photograph by Suellen Bell	17
Photograph by Kim Hamill	27
Prints by Stan Reynolds	30
Drawing by Scott Lesley	35
Photograph by Eric Dowell	43
Photograph by Billy Renkl	55
Photograph by Andrea Johnson	59



Already sweating from the bus ride, I stepped into the parking lot in time to be swarmed by Mexican urchins brandishing banderillas for sale. As they waved the ribbon-entwined, yardstick-length harpoons about with no concern that they might blind some curious tourist, their feigned enthusiasm set the mood for the event.

I moved in slow-motion to the ticket booth and paid the three hundred pesos for a seat on the *sombra*, or shadowed, side of the arena. Overhead, I could see the austere statuary in metal of a horseman herding three deadly-looking bulls. I walked under the sculpture and through the gate.

FIRST FIGHT

BY R. T. SMITH

The outside of the ring looked like a smaller but steeper version of a municipal football stadium, and the crowd ambled about aimlessly, almost like high school students looking for friends or rivals before a big game. The itinerant spectators, however, differed from the average football crowd because people in sophisticated, almost “evening” dress mingled with those in ragged work clothes. Perhaps some of them had not changed since Mass. Perhaps others came dressed for a *soirée* to follow the *corrida*. I had already learned that Juarez does not close down for Sundays.

By the time I broke away from the stream of spectators chattering rapidly in Spanish, another variety of hawker beset me. These boys were renting cushions, worn patchwork pads thinner than the steak I had eaten the night before. I rented one for thirty cents—less for comfort than because I knew that these persistent entrepreneurs would leave me alone once I had a cushion in hand.

I walked over to an empty table in the shadow of the stadium’s arched underside and sat down among people who seemed engaged in conspiratorial, intimate conversations and who drank beer or Cokes while waiting for the band, setting up metal chairs to our left, to begin.

Soon I was drinking my second *Carta Blanca* and listening to the strident brass echo off the seats. Gap-toothed old men and young boys moved from table to table peddling more drinks, *banderillas*, cushions or programs, but I took little notice of them, for I had begun watching the women.

And what women they were! Aside from the many obvious tourists—from college girls to suburban housewives in *toreador* pants—the Mexican women provided the spectacle of the day. The sun

polished their olive complexions and sparkled on their jewelry. Their black hair blew lustrous in the wind, and their eyes, dark as anthracite, had the gleam of coal about to become diamonds. These females exuded an air of expectant boredom, like teenagers who had been too long at the fair or jet-setters who had been at El Morocco and Maxim's once too often. From thirteen to forty-five, they all represented some abstract but undeniable beauty, transformed by the alcohol and the sun and the adrenalin my body was pumping in expectation of seeing my first bullfight.

When the band ended with a clear, precise and stirring trumpet solo, I followed everyone into the huge tiered stadium and found my own seat, about halfway up and facing east. Then I saw the ring for the first time, a circle of sand with dark spots where the water from the morning maintenance had not quite dried. I peered at the crowd—the families, the ringside aficionados, and of course, the señoritas—through my binoculars and waited nervously for the minute hand of my watch to reach its zenith, declaring five o'clock and the beginning of the fight. Ruffled sleeves blew in the confused wind trapped in the arena. Women tucked their tousled hair under souvenir sombreros or tightened the cinches of their Danskin tops. Men chewed cigars or bought refreshments from the ubiquitous boys. The bass drum began beating a slow “doom, doom, doom,” and two attendants in red shirts, jeered by the crowd, walked around the arena, bearing a banner like the first marchers in a high school band at the Thanksgiving parade. The text of the banner, also red, warned of the five-hundred-dollar fine for throwing objects into the ring. “Plaza Monumental” was lettered in white across the attendants' backs, but the red flashed so blindingly that I could hardly read the words. Red was about to absorb or invalidate all other colors, bleed into the entire spectrum and become the color of the day.

Then the trumpeter, a heavy-set Mexican in a gold blouse, stood up and raised his instrument to his lips. As he blew a sharp, dramatic anthem, the crowd focused its attention on the opening in the circle of the barrera, a protective wooden wall. The procession began with the picadores in their circular hats and beaded waist-jackets. Their horses, enveloped in mattresses, cantered obediently and swished their black tails as the crowd shouted angrily. Then came the banderilleros, dressed much like the matadors but for the lace decorating their tunics.

The matadors entered last in their blazing suits of lights. The metallic ornaments reflected the sunlight and made me squint to look directly at them. The three men who were to face the bulls ranged in age

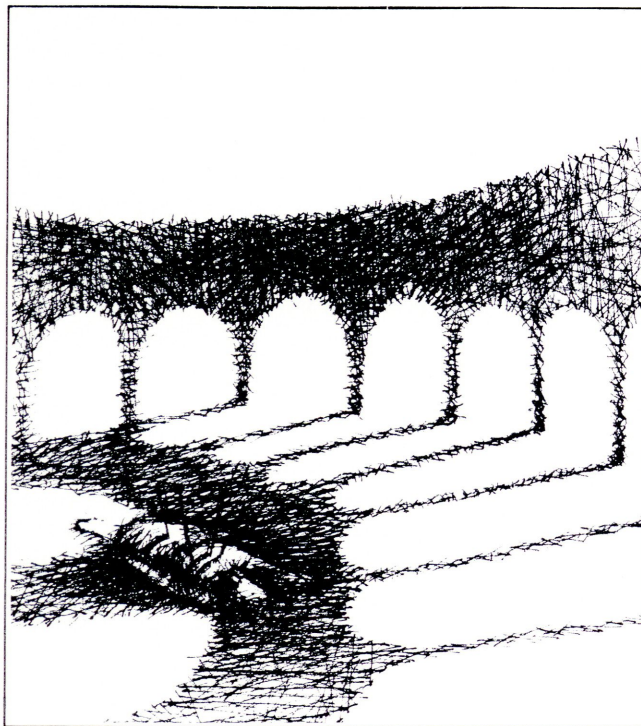
from about eighteen to forty. All were trim as gymnasts, short dark men with the look of intense absence in their eyes. As they walked with composure across the arena, the crowd did not go into hysterical applause as crowds at American sporting events do, and from the scorn on the faces of many of the people surrounding me, I began to get the idea that this trio of brave men in tight, almost dandyish suits was the visiting team. The crowd hooted and shouted at the picadores as they rode around the ring and the matadors prepared for the entrance of the first bull.

The dance began in violence. The first bull, a huge black creature with out-turned horns spanning a good yard, trotted on in excited bewilderment. The first matador—Curro Rivera—and his assistants lured the beast around and around the ring with their capes, and he appeared to be a creature from dream, *deja-vu*, or some childhood story. No one had ever prepared me for the wrought-iron look of his hide or the soiled hindquarters. No one had told me that I would feel the blood hammering in my own sweat-dampened temples and grip the field glasses like a man hanging over a cliff. Then I noticed for the first time the way the shadow of the western wall spread gradually over the ring and darkened the circle like a sped-up waning of the moon. I noticed the shadows of two light fixtures cast onto the sand like Orthodox crosses and noticed the pattern of the bull's charge and dust swirling under his nostrils when he lowered his head and pawed the ground.

The banderillero, holding one of the barbed sticks in each hand, circled the bull, chose an angle, and ran by the confused animal, rising on tiptoes in the most dance-like action of all, to stab the points into the bull's hump. The crowd at last responded with “*olé*,” but it amounted to a near-lethargic approval. Then the man took another set and repeated the act, as the bull thrashed about, trying to fix a line of interception while also trying to thrash out the small lances. They were not well placed—two came loose and lay randomly in the circle—but the moment of the banderillero's rising almost inhumanly high between the bull's horns and stabbing downward was the moment of the fight with the most sculptural clarity, the most action and precision and verifiable courage. I breathed a long sigh and took another drink when that stage was completed.

Then Rivera's helpers, after letting the bull charge their capes, retired behind the barrera, and the pair of blindfolded plug horses carried their picadores in.

The crowd went wild with anger, an enmity I almost supposed was personal, as if the picadores had used those murderous lances on a member of



each family, in an unsuccessful revolution unsuccessfully suppressed. The assistants aided in attracting the bull's attention to the horses, and the bull charged, even more furious that he could not find purchase for his horns in flesh and bone. And the picadores began their torture, stabbing the lances into the huge muscle of the animal's hump and digging, digging to weaken the muscle. I knew that the high-bred creature had to be weakened into lowering his head, if the five-and-a-half-foot-tall matadors were to work with him, and yet I imagined each lunge of the pic in my own spine, as if in penance for watching such a spectacle.

As the picadores retired, the bull stood panting in the shadows of the western quadrant of the ring. Alone, enraged, frustrated, bewildered and wounded, he stood as an icon of the inevitability of death, the death he could sense but could not foreknow, the deaths each of us who foreknew would not sense. The blood from his wound, a purplish, royal red, ran down his flank and stained the dirt in a cryptic shape reminiscent of some ancient hex sign. As more blood ran into the sign, it formed the cradle shape of a half-moon in the dust. I could think of nothing in American sports to compare the moment to, for this was not sport in which the outcome was in doubt. The outcome of this fight had been decided long before the pastel-colored posters advertising the event were glued on walls and posts and taped in windows all over El Paso and northern Chihuahua. Like the focal character in an inexorable

Greek tragedy, the bull was to die, with a rhythm not far removed from the stillness-within-motion of Miles Davis' "Sketches of Spain"—mythic, resonant, sensuous and threatening.

So passed the final slow-motion illusion in the bullfight. From then on every act and stillness struck me as sped up beyond human endurance, like a rollercoaster gone berserk.

As the matador went through his mechanical paces with the muleta and sword, never seeming to be in great danger, never achieving a pattern of unity with the sleek mass of the bull, the crowd grew more restless, as though waiting for something really incredible to happen, something that would force the whole charade to signify. It did not. The bull frothed and charged clumsily. The man took no chances. When Rivera thrust his sword under the hump and toward the bull's heart, the creature refused to fall. The assistants came out with their capes and worked the bull in circles to tire him. The result was the manipulation of the bull out of the appearance of nobility and into stupidity. After I looked around at the red beer advertisements, the red barrera, the red clothes in the crowd, I did notice a kind of vague excitement as the bull went down slowly, and the excitement—or perhaps it was just agitation—showed more on the faces of the women. Many of the men saw humor in the bull's failure to stay down, as the matador acquitted himself badly. It was a mutilation. Even the puntillero had to stab the bull at the base of the skull several times with his dagger to insure the creature's death. The crowd sneered and yelled angrily as a pair of horses, gaudily draped, were brought in to tow the beef from the arena.

I saw five other bulls of various sizes and attitudes die that day, and only the youngest of the matadors—Armillita Chico—accounted well for himself by some daring passes with the cape. He placed his banderillas himself and did the best job of that for the day, and he swirled his cape fastidiously, letting *el toro* come closer to his body than any of the other matadors did. But then he disappointed me with a radical breach of ritual by trying to place a straw cowboy hat on the horns of a reddish bull he had worked admirably to that point. And he, too, killed with little method and less style.

None of the matadors seemed especially involved in their kills, and the second, Antonio Lomelin, was so casual that one spectator threw a Coke bottle at him. Even that, he ignored. By the time the last bull had bled into the sand and the final act had failed to achieve the harmony of dance or the tension of peril, the shadows covered the arena, and the crowd, long ago grown nasty in its comments, rose and threw

their ragged cushions into the air. No flowers, no ceremony of awarding ears or tails to the heroes, no victory procession. By that time, my disappointment had mounted so gradually and so completely that the loss of potential significance hardly seemed to matter. People muttered about smaller bulls, excessive pic-ing, lazy matadors, "maricons." Many referred to the old days. Some remarked that one saw only a couple of good days in any arena in the country, and that one came hoping for beauty but expecting disappointment. Still, even in their dissatisfaction, the people leaving the bullring seemed more animated, more pleased in some incalculable way than they had been two hours before.

As I stood up, stretched and turned to walk toward the concourse—still trying to digest the sequence of events, still failing—I saw the young boys slowly gathering thrown cushions down in the arena, and one active figure caught my eye, where she has been indelibly etched since.

A young girl, not yet at puberty, ran excitedly up

the tiers of seats. The wind caught her frilly blue blouse and swirling skirt, delicate as crepe. She was dressed for a ceremony, perhaps a confirmation, but in each hand she brandished a yellow-ribboned banderilla, the two just removed from the last bull, and the blood ran down the barbed sticks until it trickled onto her wrists. The wind caught her black lustrous hair and tossed it back, revealing an overjoyed but almost sinister smile on her face. She raced upward, bearing her trophies like a young maenad. She was transfigured to the personification of beauty and terror at once, a tribute to the untranslatable nature of the bullfight, and like the entire spectacle, once beheld, she was unforgettable. She was absolutely, savagely pleased with herself, but it was a pleasure inaccessible to me. Sometimes, when I take from my pocket the fifty-peso piece I keep for a souvenir and examine the mutilated Aztec maiden on it, I feel that I have reached the threshold of understanding, but it is a threshold I cannot quite cross.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CYNTHIA J. BRAUN

Driving On The Backroads

The Chevy, frigidaire white,
With chrome wheels,
Sparrows down the highway
Sliding under the night.
The teeth of the grill
Grit against the slipstream,
That sweeps away confusion
And recedes into rear-view miles.
A vice of concentration
Welds the world into
A single stretch of highway.
The mind diffuses into
Thousands of synchronized parts
In precise articulation.
The engine's music, fine tuned,
Rumbles in continuous crescendo,
Its polluted chemical breath
Coughs and growls into mufflers,
And mingles with a rush
Of sweet summer winds,
That tease the will to carelessness
With the promise of eternal summers.

David Scott Ward



PRINT BY MARTY JOSEPH

The Exile

Pained among sea wrack I woke and saw
The ruined beach, the sea's white claw
Tearing again the shore's grim scars,
Gleaming against the hard, salt stars.
The sea had cast me up again.
Now, surely, it began to rain.
Rain turned to sleet, to pointed rime.
My hands lost touch. Dire wind froze time.
In chains of ice the waves creaked, bound.
And it was only then I found
The man who wakes on lordless ground
Must learn the beat of bleakest sound.

Joseph Harrison



"Dr. Davis, I have withdrawn from all classes. I'm going home to Birmingham. Russ." I taped the note to my graduate school advisor's office door after waiting an hour to see him. A note, though? Tacky, Russ, very tacky. Well, hell, I had to pack. I couldn't wait there all day.

DROPPING OUT

BY RUSS GURLEY

While I was packing, the phone rang, and Dr. Davis asked me to come by his office to discuss my note. What was I going to say? I had told my landlady the night before that I was leaving. "I'm not pleased with the department here," I had lied. Now what was I going to tell the department? I'm not pleased with my landlady? Not that easy, buster.

"Russ, come on in. Your note kind of took me by surprise. Do you mind telling me why you're planning to drop out?"

Planning? Man, I've already sold my books, gone through the bureaucratic bullshit at the registrar's office, and spent next month's rent for a trailer to load all my junk. I'm not *planning* to drop out.

"You see, Dr. Davis, I just . . ." My mind was racing. Should I give the 'I need to make money' approach? How about 'My degree is not marketable?' Maybe 'My values have changed?'

"Russ, why aren't you answering?" My mind must not have been racing. "You don't feel the course work is too difficult, do you?" My God, of course not. I scored the highest grade on each of our first two tests; I was the only one to write our first computer program successfully. "No, sir. That's not a problem." "Glad that isn't it, because we're really expecting good things from you. Just yesterday, Dr. Cafferty was telling the graduate faculty about the insightful questions you were asking in class."

My questions and his inadequate answers were one of the reasons that the rental trailer was packed and ready for the journey home. How could I tell Dr. Davis the truth? That I thought the "-ology" he had chosen to research and teach was worthless. That I found the great majority of Ph.D.'s to be arrogant, lazy bastards who concocted bizarre research projects just to receive grant money. That these same academicians were people who wrote scholarly articles on the sex life of male pterodactyls or the fact that people in New York City behave like people in Peoria under similar circumstances, and these scholars were so myopic that they honestly believed that their studies had value.

Instead of answering Dr. Davis, I asked him why he thought it was important for me to continue my schooling for four years (or longer) in order to obtain the coveted Doctor of Philosophy degree. He explained to me that a doctorate would allow me to be heard in circles where I would not otherwise be accepted. Actually his response was a bit lengthier, but I stopped listening after the initial crap. When he finally finished, I just told him that I was having some problems coming to grips with life and that I was leaving. Period. Finis. Curtains close.

The ride home gave me plenty of time to dread my immediate future. A barrage of questions from parents, friends, and ex-teachers awaited me. What would I tell them? That I just want to be the catcher in the rye? No, that's been used. That I want to concentrate on writing? Obviously not that. There were so many reasons for why I left school, no one could understand them all. So I made excuses that said what people wanted to hear. Computers, Dad, that is where it's at. I wouldn't be able to get a job with a

Ph.D. in psychology, but I could with a computer degree. Mom, I want to serve others, find something meaningful to do, help someone less fortunate than I. Well, my pedantic friend, I've discovered that the theoretical foundations of my major have been so grossly misinterpreted that this discipline is now no more than a myriad of unrelated hypotheses, theories, and paradigms.

So I am unemployed. There was elementary school, junior high, high school, college: sixteen years of school. That means, 342 A's, 16 B's, 2 C's. I could continue to make A's and B's in graduate school.

But what then? I could sign my name as Dr. Gurley perhaps. And I might even receive grant money to study the reasons that students drop out of graduate school.

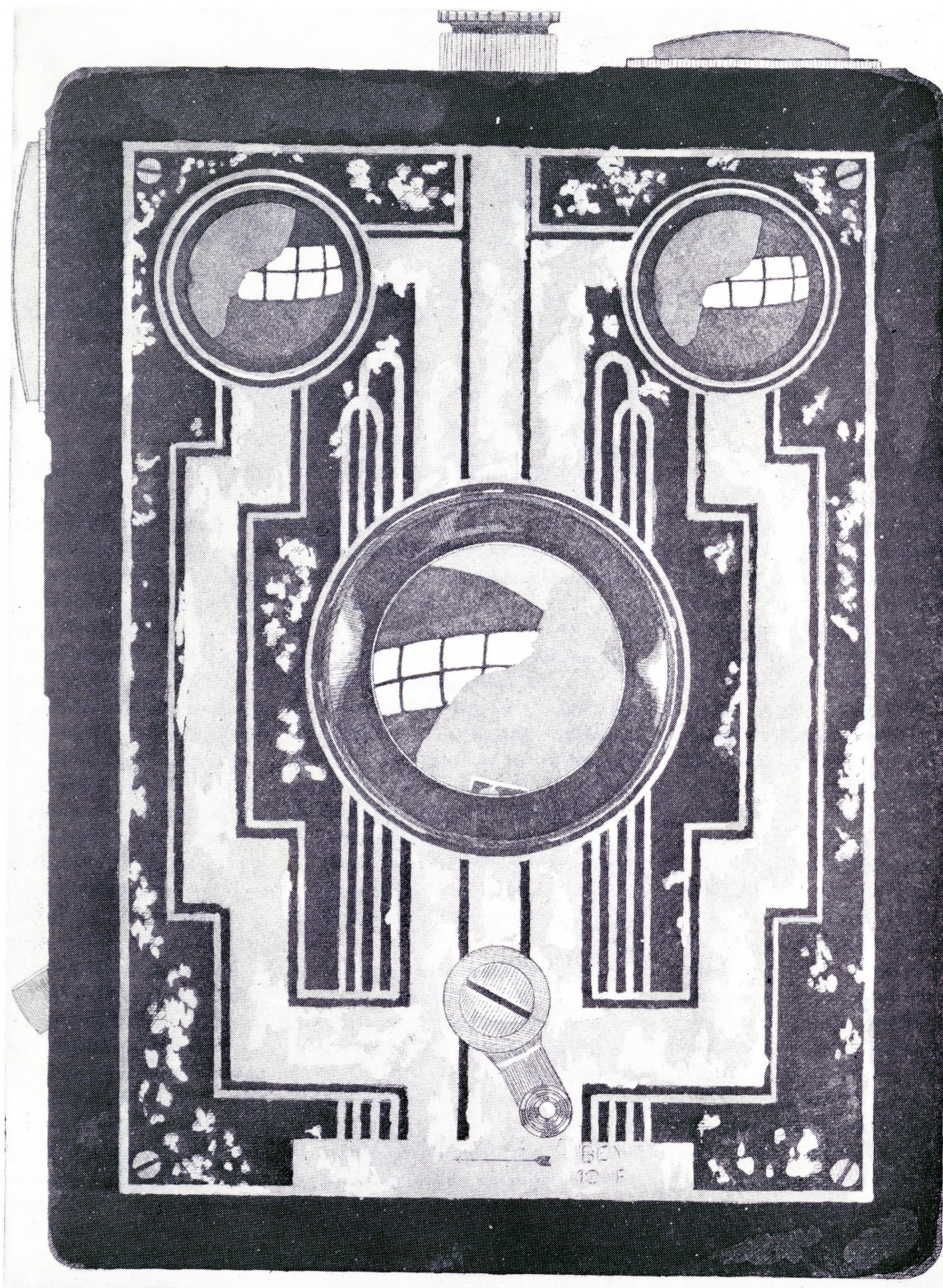
But I don't have a Ph.D., and, as Dr. Davis explained, I guess I'll never be heard in the right circles.

Lingering Here for KH

We are lingering here
in the borderland
between glance and look,
where all things unconsidered
remain stationary,
floating on the awareness
of a weapon sharper than sarcasm.
Here, the ambiguity
in every gesture
drives home the dilemma
of awareness against oblivion;
the acknowledgement of certain identity
or certain annihilation.

When forced though, to a wall
someday, to a border
where intent is denounced
and action imperative,
I will have to tell you then
what you don't know yet —
Anything you say, any words
or actions given, slash
across me with the high frequency
of a whip coming home.

Kellie Hobbs



Print by Vann Baker "You push the button, we do the rest."

ROMANCE AND HORROR

Gresham writes
about dispossession in the South

BY DAVID BENSON

Failing to find sufficient stimulation in his family or work, Henry Timberdale let his wife go her own way and plunged himself, in his leisure hours, into his one hobby: He was a Civil War buff, though he preferred the term "War Between the States." Late in his life, his collection of memorabilia filled one of the mansion's ball-rooms with guns, flags, maps, books, and even mannikins clad in Confederate uniforms. He had models of all the key generals—Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and the others. There wasn't a finer collection of its kind in the South.

Fitting it was then, in a grotesque way, that Henry Timberdale would die dressed in one of his tailor-made, authentic gray uniforms, the uniform of a colonel. But it was the cause of his death that had most troubled Katie, for she suspected the hand, in some way, of the shadow thing.

The black maid, Jessie, had discovered him in the cellar; the authorities ruled the death suicide by hanging. Looking for all the world like a Confederate soldier whom the Yankees had just executed, Henry Timberdale twisted slowly at the end of a rope tied to a ceiling joist.

(from *Moon Lake*)

Stephen Gresham, associate professor of English, leans back in his chair and stares at the horror novels lining his office walls. A smile crosses his whiskered face. "Horror is a romantic mode," he says. "It's a combination of love and cosmic dread."

Of average height and slender build, with a well-trimmed beard, Gresham doesn't look like the stereotype of a horror novelist: not at all dark or foreboding. But as he speaks, as he expands his ideas and thoughts, one realizes that Gresham has a grasp on something frightening; he can reach into the depths of his mind and pull forth very real and terrifying ideas.

Vampires, werewolves, psychopaths and other monsters that dwell in superstitious minds are fodder for his stories. Gresham weaves them into situations that are all too possible in our work-a-day world.

The author's first book, *Moon Lake*, is set in the South, possibly not too far from Auburn. The lake is fictional, though it was based on Lake Alice in Florida.

Gresham is fascinated with the South as a setting for horror stories. "In the South I think you get that sense of dispossession. There

are greater possibilities for isolation. There is so much land that isn't used for anything. You can go by huge fields and they're empty. If you went by those same fields in Kansas or Nebraska, people would be farming them. All the land is used. In the South it's not, and you get this funny sense of, I call it dispossession. You're not quite sure how people are living or what they're doing."

Gresham plays on that dispossession, on the eeriness of the South. Lonely areas appeal to him in a way that other people might not appreciate. He takes the loneliness, the unearthly sense of an area, and lets it work in his mind, finally turning it into a story. "If it frightens me, it works," he says.

The loneliness of the South helps Gresham to construct the characters he uses in his stories. Gresham believes that the possibility of isolation can transfer itself to the people of the area. "Human relationships are ghostly things," he says. "People are perhaps slightly more eccentric (in the South). It's hard to be very specific about what it is. It's just kind of a feeling that the South adds. It perpetuates the sense of dispossession—more so, I think, than other parts of the country."

As he guided 'The Homebird' back to the boat ramp, Katie stood alone on the deck. Her thoughts swirled in patterns of nebulous regret.

But Waltman's thoughts were clear and resolute. 'Somebody's out to get you. Be on the lookout for them. They're out there somewhere. This stupid bitch is one of them.'

A stony silence lay heavily on them as they tied up at the dock and he drove her back to the mansion.

There was nothing more to say, though as Katie let herself out of the car she whispered, "I'm sorry, Charles."

Timberdale mansion loomed over him in the darkness. Anger welled up in him, negating one final attempt to say something, anything. 'Stupid bitch. Made a fool out of me.'

He reached beneath the driver's seat and smiled at the touch of the new revolver.

"The Timberdale background strikes me as the most Southern thing about the book. Another factor of the Timberdales is Katie." Gresham styled her as a lovely Southern belle of the 1940's with a slight difference. Katie is independent. She is a strong woman with strong ideas, and yet every inch a Southern lady.

There is, however, an aspect in the novel that is not unique to the South: the psychopath. *Moon Lake* is not a story about a psychopathic killer on the loose in the South, hacking up defenseless people, but the antagonist was a lunatic before he died. Now he's the shadow thing, a demented embodiment of evil inhabiting Moon Lake.

Though the novel is set in recent times, the idea for the shadow thing got its birth in the 1940's. Gresham got the idea from an account of a lunatic who went

crazy one day and killed twelve people.

"The psychopathic killer was suddenly a factor in the late 1940's," the author said. "There isn't always a reason for lunacy—something just snaps."

In *Moon Lake* there is some reason for Waltman's behavior. His love is spurned by Katie, the lady of the mansion, and he sets out to destroy the one thing she loves—Moon Lake. As the shadow thing, Waltman controls everything in the lake.

He was in the lake madly trying to stay afloat. An island of hyacinth drifted near like a giant green life preserver. He grabbed at it; the waxy leaves slipped through his fingers. But then he felt pressure on his wrist and a tugging. The sheer elation of being saved relaxed him and he realized how exhausted he was. He let himself

go limp and turned his head toward the pressure on his wrist.

The bleached-white skeletal fingers tightened as he screamed and tried to pull away. Then they released him. He thrashed the water and frog-kicked his legs, unmindful of which direction he might be headed.

Fishing and Southerners go hand in hand and Gresham plays on that tradition in the setting for his story. "I think Southerners have a great love of lakes and having a cabin on a lake. I was drawing on that."

Gresham combines several elements of the South—a wealthy pulpwood family, a lake covered with water hyacinth, and isolation—to create his novel. He continues to use the South in his novels because he believes that it has the most potential for horror and for what frightens people the most.



DRAWING BY MATT MCCLENDON



When I was in the third grade my mother and I moved into a Spanish-style apartment in California. Our street was the dividing line between Burbank and North Hollywood; we were on the North Hollywood side, but still my mother hated it. She hated everything about California, hated the immorality of 1968, but she especially hated our neighborhood. It was made of three blocks of fake adobe apartment buildings joined like a triangle; in the middle was a grass plot trampled into dirt by our sockball games and mudball wars. Half the apartments were rented by hippies—we, the children of nice, very middle-class parents, said the word with the same spite and disdain our mothers had referred to “perverts” with. The rest of our neighbors were people like us—nice women who had grown up optimistically, married hopefully, had a child or two. They couldn’t understand what had gone wrong, why they were alone and getting old. I shudder when I think of all the afternoons I spent in my bedroom with a book, trying to ignore the voices of the four or five women whom I knew were smoking and drinking wine in our living room. They traded stories which all sounded the same to me—the husband’s infidelities, the reconciliations, the final break late at night over a strange woman’s voice on the phone, or an unfamiliar address in strange handwriting. Then the hassles over alimony, child support; the lousy dates, the lays, the emotional whirlwind of single life.

Kim’s mother was one of these bitter, borderline alcoholic, divorced women, but she wasn’t quite as bitter as the others—her ex-husband was dead. He had been killed in a bar across the Mexican border in a knife fight over a Tijuana whore. When Kim told me this, with all the worldly indifference of someone two years older, I was thrilled. I thought it romantic. My father was quite alive, selling real estate in Florida. When he left my mother, it was unimaginatively for his secretary. I was ashamed to tell this to Kim, though. Instead I told her my father was a skydiver, had parachuted onto the top of the Empire State Building, but had lost his balance and fallen, splattering at the feet of the mayor of New York. It had been in the papers for months, I said.

Kim repeated this story to her friends long after she must have learned the truth from her mother—“Both our fathers are dead, you know,” she would say. Somehow I had come under her protection; I was spared the disdain she so often showed to the others. Everyone wanted her approval, courted it. One afternoon Michael came out

SCENES INSIDE THE GOLDMINE

BY KELLIE HOBBS

with a book he thought we'd like—he had found it in his parents' closet. Kim looked at it first. Over her shoulder I saw a man and a woman, naked, sweating; not understanding, I squinted, looking closer, but Kim slammed the book shut and flung it to the ground. She walked off, the line of her back stiff.

After seeing this, and knowing she didn't talk to Michael for a week afterwards, I watched myself. I was careful. I knew that if she found out how shy I was, how scared, she would despise me. We would never again go swimming, or sit under a tree talking, with me admiring the long muscles in her throat, the hugeness of her hands, the calmness of her grey eyes. With those eyes watching me, I jumped off the highest diving board at the pool, I ripped off newspapers from people's front porches and sold them a few blocks away, I smashed Coke bottles in the alley behind our building. Kim told me, "If you throw a Coke bottle over your left shoulder and make a wish, if the bottle breaks, your wish will come true."

One Friday we met in late afternoon under the tree, and when Kim turned her face to me I saw the print of a hand on her smooth, tanned cheek. I stared, not daring to touch, and Kim shrugged, saying lightly, "Mom is having her newest boyfriend over. They've been doing it, and I asked her if she wanted me to leave so she could sleep with him. She hit me and called me a brat. Not even Mom," she scowled—the dark eyebrows drew together; lines formed around her mouth—"can hit me like that, especially when I didn't do anything." I wanted to touch her, but I couldn't; I could only say, "You can spend the night with me; do you want to?" I took

her shrug for assent. "I'll go ask Mom."

Mom was in the kitchen starting dinner, and when I asked her if Kim could spend the night she sighed and said, "Aren't you two sick of each other yet?"

"Oh, no, Mom. We're best friends. Please can she spend the night?" Still she hesitated; she didn't know how important it was. I tried to explain. "Kim's mother hit her because she was doing it with a man...."

"That's enough. She can spend the night, but I want you to eat your dinner before you go back outside."

I rushed through my food, swallowing it without tasting it. I didn't know what it was. When I got outside I saw a crowd under the tree, Kim in the middle—tall, authoritative, aloof. I went up to them, but they became too quiet, too still. On Kim's face was the contempt that I knew, sooner or later, would be there. She had found me out.

"You've been telling everyone my mother is a slut," she said quietly. I wanted to say something, but my tongue was heavy and wouldn't move. "Michael heard you telling your mother." The crowd behind her moved and blurred; I couldn't pick out Michael.

I saw her heavy, brown hand in the air for hours, it seemed, before I felt it land across my nose with the force of an anvil. I cried, I think, and Kim led the crowd away, disgust screaming from the hold of her head. I walked around the neighborhood till long after dark, and could feel the wet heaviness of blood and snot on my face long after it had been washed away by my tears.

Miranda lies beneath the magnolia tree,
staring into its green depths,
a bottomless well of leaves and sky.
Breezes stroke her face
with the dappled shadowlight of summer.
She beckons,
and the branches bestow
ivory petals, falling softly
to her blanket of grass
with their offering of sweet, thick perfume.
She is young, with dreams unknown to me,
as foreign as forgotten childhood.
Her eyes behold only
a magnolia tree,
falling flowers,

sun and shade.
Yet something echoes within me—
a memory, a moment,
and the limbs become
the empty arms of lovers
reaching, unconsolated.
Blossoms fall like silent heartache,
emptiness entombed under decades.
Shuddering, I retreat
to faded brown photographs,
attic silk,
and crisp-edged flowers
pressed between book pages
like dried tears.

Jody Kamins

A Day By The Pond

A bullfrog trumps
By the blue-green water of the pond.
I enter the one room cabin
I built with a borrowed axe,
Far away from town
And a churning sea of civilization.
I have with me a pail
Full of purple huckleberries,
I woke early to gather them.
Such are the exigencies
Of my days.

The path from my door
Reaches to the pond
Like a crooked arm,
Leads me to my morning bath,
Where cool water
Shapes my body into one sense.

From a world of desperation
I have come,
To live life deliberately;

For meditations to reach
The depths of the pond.

I have no company,
Save the brown squirrels
Who spring from limb to limb
With unreasonable agility.
I have no money,
Save what the pond affords,
Perch and Pickerel to go a-fishing for.
I have no fame,
No one knows me
Save the woodchuck or the jay.

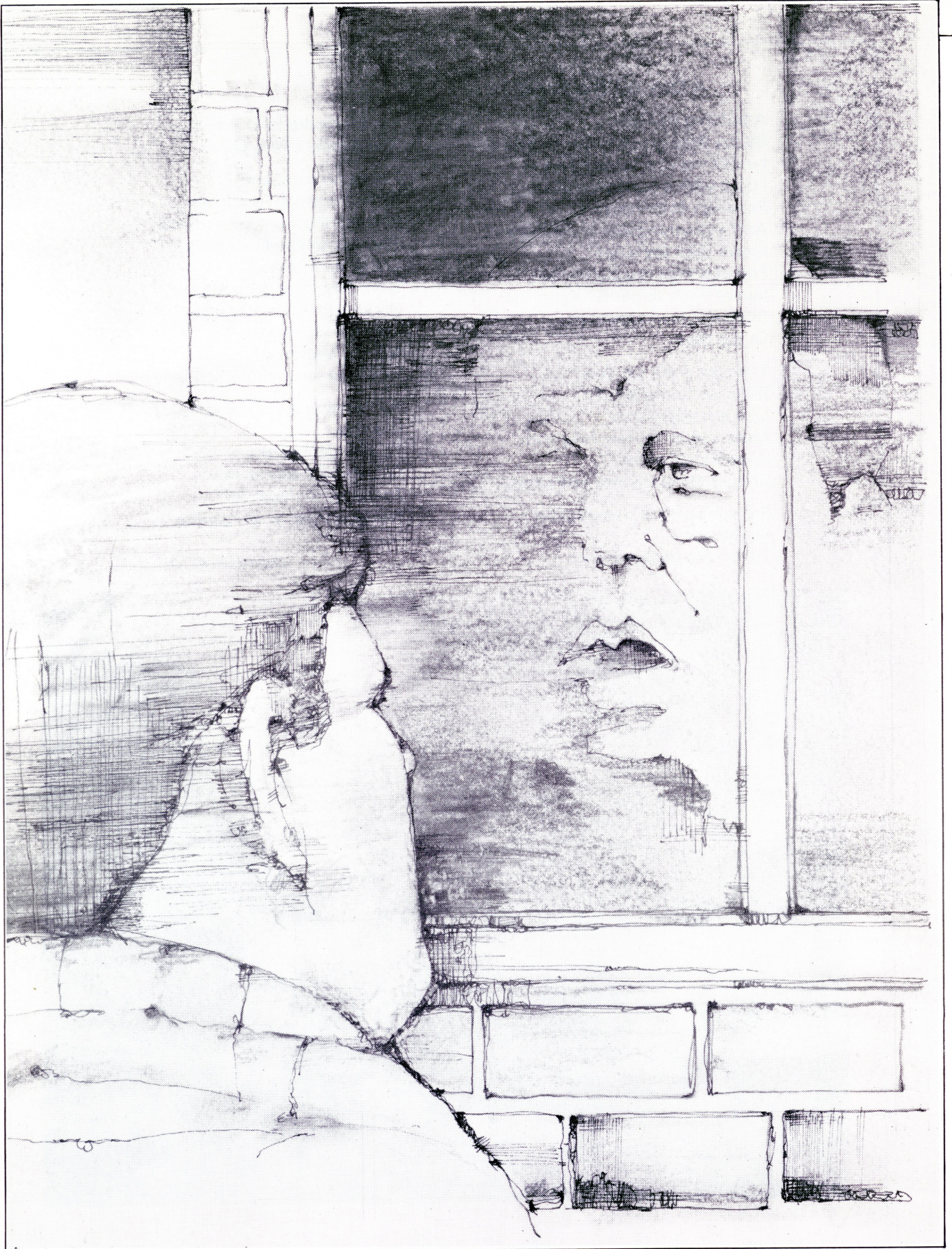
So. What is my purpose?
It is this:
To live life indifferent
Of society's sacred laws,
To follow without fail
The drummer of my genius.

David Scott Ward



PHOTOGRAPH BY SUELLEN BELL

ILLUSTRATION BY SUSAN R. PERRY



It had happened again. Myron Shapiro, a pale, pudgy philosophy major at CUNY, was walking home to his apartment. Alone. How could he have let it happen again? The evening had gotten off to such a good start. Enid was a gorgeous girl, sweet, interesting, and fairly alert for a psychology major. The Chinese restaurant offered agreeably low prices and a surprising amount of elegance. (Myron usually avoided cheap Chinese restaurants because they always looked like

whorehouses in Singapore on the inside. But this one wasn't so bad.)

Myron had dazzled Enid with his charm and trenchant wit, and he had peppered his conversation with frequent references to various poets, novelists, and psychologists. He could tell she was impressed. By the time the five-spice chicken was served, Myron figured he was home free. But then the fortune cookies arrived with the check, and the old, familiar tragic cycle repeated itself again. Enid had read her fortune and laughed it off, saying that all this fortune-telling stuff was a lot of drivel, a silly throwback to the days when men accepted the

supernatural. Myron arched his eyebrows. "Don't you accept fortune-telling? Don't you believe in fate—in a supernatural influence which hovers over our lives? Don't you believe in a transcendent force which

rules nature, men, and their destinies?" Buoyed by his own eloquence, Myron lurched forward, slipped, and landed on a plate of fried wontons. As he righted himself, Myron caught a glimpse of Enid heading toward the exit. He heard her mutter something about being glad she

had enough money for cab fare, or words to that effect.

Mr. Shapiro Meets FATE

BY JOHN DEKONTY

So, Myron once again was traveling the lonely path to his dark, vacant apartment. Alone. Forsaken. Why? Am I the only one left who believes in fate, Myron asked himself. Does every coed *have* to reject the supernatural—is that an entrance requirement, or what? It just wasn't fair. Thomas Hardy believed in fate; did he have trouble getting dates?

Myron, lost in a cloud of unpleasant thoughts, suddenly became aware of someone walking behind him. The someone was wearing a flannel shirt, khaki pants, and a pair of Sebago Campsiders (but no socks). Myron's first impression of the stranger was that he looked a little like Myron himself. The stranger came straight toward him. A mugger. Great. This is all I need, Myron said to himself. Thanks a lot, Fate.

"You're welcome," said the stranger.

Uh-oh. A lunatic. Better get out of this guy's way as quickly as possible. "Go ahead, take my wallet. Just don't hurt me. I won't cause any trouble," Myron said, reaching for his wallet. "Geez, Fate certainly has dealt me a rotten hand tonight."

"I have not," the stranger shot back. "And keep your wallet. You probably think I can't earn a decent living any more, now that nobody seems to believe I exist."

Myron stopped moving. "Wait a minute. Just who the hell are you?"

"You mean to say you don't know me? I would have thought that you, of all people, would recognize me instantly. Look closer, man. I'm Fate."

"Beg pardon?"

"You know, Fate. The transcendent force which rules nature, men, and their destinies. Normally I hang around the Great Beyond, but, business being what it is these days, I decided to come down to visit the few remaining faithful who still believe in me. So cheer up, Myron. Welcome your guest. And don't feel bad about what happened at the restaurant. I had to get Enid out of the picture in order for us to have our visit, so I made you fall on the won-tons. But don't worry about Enid. She'll agree to date you again, and you'll score with her on March 19. Oh, and if I were you, I'd stay away from that Chinese restaurant. They claim that the cuisine is authentic, but I happen to know that the place is owned by a guy named Vito. So consider yourself warned."

Myron tried to speak, but could only manage to produce a low gurgling sound. His first thought, of course, was that this guy had escaped from the nearest asylum. But how did he know Myron's name? How did he know about Enid and the restaurant and the won-tons? Could Myron actually prove, through logic or empirical evidence, that this guy *wasn't* Fate?

"Ah, I can tell by the look on your face that you *want* to believe in me. That's a good start. Why be a skeptic? Why be a hypocrite? You've told everybody that you believe in me, and now here I am in front of you. Well, aren't there some questions you've been dying to ask?"

Myron gulped. Why not play along? The guy seemed harmless enough. "If you're Fate, then why aren't you blind? Medieval artists always portrayed Fate as being blind."

"Well, I had an operation for cataracts. Cleared the problem right up. And besides, you should know that medieval art isn't exactly the last word in photographic realism. Have you seen how those guys portrayed my sister Fortuna? Art collectors pay big money for that crap these days. Can't figure it out."



"Doesn't it disturb you that no one believes in you any more? You know, these days anybody who says that there is a force which transcends the material universe is considered a bit of an anachronism."

"Ever notice how verbose you are, Myron? Anyway, it's an exaggeration to say that no one believes anymore—there's you, for instance. For what that's worth. And besides, being forgotten has its good points. You think it was pleasant to be constantly confronted by angry mortals complaining about the way I've treated them? Oh, sure, I still get the occasional curse from a real estate agent when a big condo deal falls through, but that's not nearly as bad as kings and princes constantly telling me how cruel and unfair I am. I don't need that stuff—bad for my blood pressure."

"But even if men don't believe in you, do you still run things? Are you still in charge? Are you responsible for Reagan and *Three's Company* and pollution and the fact that I can't get to first base with a girl?"

"Don't forget Enid and March 19, Myron. You'll think a lot more highly of me after that. As for those other things, I tried for centuries to run everything even after most people rejected the supernatural. But it got to the point where I just couldn't handle the pressure. Too much going on—too many people. And most of them either crooks or lunatics. So I started looking for a way out. And around the middle of the nineteenth century Chuck Darwin made it possible for me to retire. Now when things go

wrong, people don't blame me—they blame nature. Geez, it's nice, not having all that responsibility. So I've been taking it easy for the last 150 years. Oh, I'll drop in every now and again to dabble in an election or swing a World Series or ruin some uppity billionaire, but mostly I just kick around the Great Beyond and visit folks."

"Visit? Who do you visit?"

"I've got a lot of friends. Writers, poets, artists, philosophers, composers—and one guy, a Dutch chef from the sixteenth century, who whips up pastries like you wouldn't believe. Shakespeare can have his sonnets—just give me one of Pietyr's prune danishes."

Certainly somewhere in the back of Myron's mind there was a voice screaming, "Call the cops before this nut pulls a knife!" But Myron, for the moment, paid it no heed. "Artists? Writers? Composers? Which ones?"

"Oh, all of them. Too many to mention. Funny thing is, all these guys change so much when they reach the Great Beyond. You'd hardly recognize them."

"What causes these changes?" Myron queried. "Is it the manifestation of their true essence, the stripping away of corporeal weaknesses? Does the triumph of inner consciousness cause a complete obliteration of their material self and their former attributes?"

"Again with the verbosity. Does it really surprise you that you don't hit it off with girls? Anyway, they change because their earthly life is over, and they're tired of striving to be great. After decades of working and struggling to impress the world with how talented and impressive they are, they're exhausted. By the time they reach the afterlife, they figure they can relax and be themselves. So they pursue other interests, find other hobbies. Wordsworth, for example. Since he found out how much space he's been given in the Norton Anthology, he hasn't written a line of verse. Figures he's got it made. So now he just sits around playing gin rummy with his sister. They keep trying to get Coleridge to play with them, but he and Thomas de Quincey are too busy running a drug rehabilitation center."

"This is fantastic!" Myron said. "Who else can you tell me about?"

"Well, let's see. Gertrude Stein joined an aerobic dancing class and lost about a hundred pounds. She looks great—you should see her in a swimsuit. She broke up with Alice B. Toklas and moved in with Emily Dickinson. They're talking about going on a cruise together this summer."

"What about Hemingway?"

"Well, he got a bit of a surprise when he got here.

First thing he did was try to organize a safari. What he didn't know is that animals are a little different in the afterlife—they're a lot smarter, and they don't appreciate being hunted. So the first night out, a lion walks up to Hemingway, grabs him by the collar, and tells him that if he doesn't cut out all this macho great-white-hunter crap he is going to start losing bodily organs one at a time. Hemingway went straight home and hasn't been seen much since, although rumor has it that he spends a lot of time doing needlepoint and making fudge."

"What about Shakespeare? What's he been up to these 400 years?"

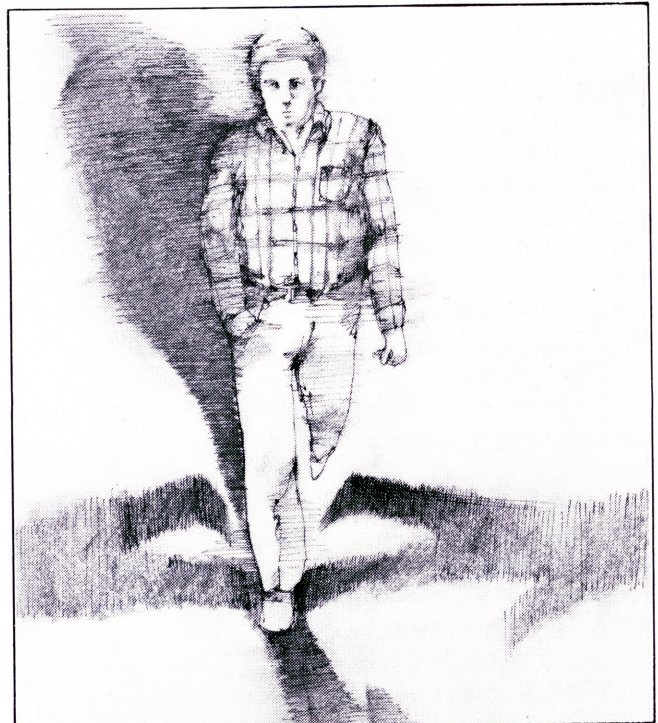
"Not much. Spends most of his time drinking with Scott Fitzgerald."

"What do they talk about—the changing function of the tragic hero in literature?"

"No, mostly they complain that Hollywood can't make a decent movie version of any of their works."

Myron's interests wandered to other fields. "What about the great composers—how do guys like Bach and Beethoven spend their time?"

"Beethoven has gotten addicted to pinball. Plays it all the time—says that the battle between man and pinball machine is the greatest of heroic struggles. And he firmly believes that pinball provides more tactile pleasures than video games. But Beethoven's temper being what it is, he tends to be a little unruly when a ball goes through the flippers. Just this past month he's been thrown out of Petey's Pinball Palace three times. As for Bach, he's ghost-written a



lot of music for living composers who need a hand. Of course, considering the circumstances, he doesn't get much credit. But he still has his touch. 'Puttin' On the Ritz,' 'I Enjoy Being a Girl,' 'Wake Up, Little Susie,' 'I Can't Get No Satisfaction'—the guy's a genius."

"Bach wrote those? *Bach?*"

"Yeah, he stays pretty busy. But I'm a little surprised at you—I thought you'd be interested in philosophers. You are, you may remember, a philosophy major."

"Philosophers. Don't they tend to be a little dull compared to poets and musicians?"

"Oh, you'd be surprised. A lot of them join the philosopher's bowling league. They get along great together—it's fun to watch Sartre and Kant swapping lies about how many perfect games they've bowled. The only guy who was thrown off the team was Plato. Couldn't knock over a pin to save his life. Of course, he defended himself by saying that the pins are merely shadows of the *real* pins, so how could he be expected to knock them down? But Schopenhauer, the team captain, didn't buy that—he said that Plato was just a lousy bowler and that he never volunteered to pick up the tab when the team went out for drinks after a game."

"Gosh, they were kind of rough on him, weren't they?"

"Not as rough as they were on Socrates when he missed a spare in the tenth frame and made them lose a tournament. They forced him to drink—"

"Hemlock? *Again?*"

"No, not hemlock. They made him drink an entire six pack of generic beer. It was a dreadful sight. But these things happen when you don't live in an ideal universe. And besides, I would think that Socrates and Plato would stay away from the lanes. After all, it's damned difficult to bowl when you're wearing a toga."

"I can imagine. What about Nietzsche? Is he still a nihilist?"

"Well, not really. He said that being a philosopher had messed up his mind, so he decided to work with his hands instead. So he took some classes and became an auto mechanic. Damn good one, too. He just opened up a garage—Nutsy Nietzsche's Economy VW Repair, he calls it. Gives a free lube job with every tune-up."

Myron dismissed from his mind an image of Nietzsche sliding under a '64 Beetle to check the transaxle and asked some more questions. "So all you do is go around and visit these people? Don't you ever try to come out of retirement? Wouldn't you like just once more to bring about a global conflict, or something like that?"

"Yeah, but I'm too old for that sort of thing. And besides, I had grown tired with it all. I was sick of causing misery and death and high tuition rates. It was all so arbitrary—I would knock this guy down and build that guy up, for no good reason. I was like someone who owns a pet snake. You know what you feed a pet snake? Hamsters. So a snake owner has to go to the pet store every now and again to buy a hamster to feed his snake. Think of that—those fat, furry, cute, innocent little animals, and one of them is going to end up in the snake's gullet. The snake owner doesn't take the time to choose a mean hamster or an ill-tempered hamster or a terminally ill hamster. He just grabs one, and it's doomed. See what I mean—arbitrary. And that's what I did for centuries—I grabbed men at random and fed them to snakes. No pattern. No logic. All completely arbitrary. And then one day it dawned on me how utterly and completely cruel it all was. So now I pretty much stay out of things. And when I do interfere, I'm very selective. I try to emphasize positive values—virtue, honesty. And love, of course. Like you and Enid on March 19. Boy, will that be nice! Bringing two people from Queens together may be a step down from Antony and Cleopatra, but I don't care. I don't feel nearly as cruel anymore, and I can sleep at night."

Myron let all this sink in, and slowly the wheels started turning. This guy was nothing like the Fate he had read about. This guy tried to be moral; everyone knew that Fate is amoral. This guy tried to be fair; everyone knew that Fate is not concerned with fairness. This guy said that Bach wrote songs for Mick Jagger; everyone knew that Bach would probably use his wig to strangle Mick Jagger if the two ever met. Worst of all, this guy was sentimental, and everyone knew that Fate could never, ever in a million years be sentimental. How would Boethius react to this guy? Boethius would call him a big fake, that's how.

"Look, you," Myron said, "I don't know who you are or where you came from, but you're obviously a lunatic and you're probably dangerous. You're no more Fate than I am. It's a patent impossibility. I don't know what you want, but you better take off in a hurry, because in five seconds I'm gonna yell for a policeman."

A pained expression came over the stranger's face. "Look, Myron, don't play the rationalist with me."

"One."

"I wouldn't think that someone like you would want to get on Fate's bad side."

"Two."

"Come on, Myron. Where's your sense of adventure? What happened to your belief in the

supernatural?"

"Three."

"I must say I'm disappointed in you, Myron."

"Four."

"Okay, you win. But there are no hard feelings. I can understand your doubts. But I'm still pulling for you, Myron, and I'm still going to work things out between you and Enid, just to show you what a swell guy I am. So don't forget March 19!"

"Five."

Myron started to call for a cop, but, oddly enough, a cop was already standing beside him. And the stranger was gone.

"What's the trouble, Mac?" the policeman said.

"Did you see that guy who was standing here just now? I think he's dangerous. He told me he was Fate."

"Probably the mental case that escaped today from Bellevue. I shoulda known he'd turn up in my neck of the woods. This is all I need. Told you he was Fate, huh? That's funny. I heard that this guy thought he was Lou Gehrig, and that he was trying to get to Ebbets Field for a Yankees-Dodgers game.

You never know what kooks like that will come up with next."

After giving the policeman a description of the stranger, Myron made his way home. He was angry and disgusted with himself for standing in the night air and talking to a lunatic for an hour. What a sap he'd been. Well, at least Myron would have a good story to tell his friends. Maybe he could tell Enid. That's what he'd do—he'd call Enid, tell her the story, and then try to patch things up. When he got home, Myron dialed Enid's number.

"Hello, this is Enid Smeltznik. Who's calling, please?"

"Hello, Enid. This is Myron." He paused. He felt strange. Somehow it seemed that he wasn't completely in control. "Look, I'm sorry about tonight, Enid. I had a bizarre experience, and I think you'd enjoy hearing about it. Let's get together and try once again, okay?"

"Well, all right. When do you want to get together?"

Myron thought for a moment.

"Enid, do you have any plans for March 19?"

Kinetic Sculpture

A poet does not photograph;
He does not catch
In a frozen second
The poised juxtaposition of parts.
His mind is not a Leica; he cannot
Snap at f5.6 (four-hundred-speed)
Click!—Whirrr—Presto, an experience
Laid flat and still glistening
From Dektol on the table,
Crystallized in chemical ice
At room temperature:
For such flat and motionless
Images are no more alive than
The cartoon caricatures of third grade.

A poet, rather, fondles fire;
Shapes, through depth and breadth and height—
Reigned by neither space nor time—
This mobile being whose motile parts
(Some soft as snakes, some sharp as shivs)
Mesh like beveled drivers in the protein
Pathways of the mind—
A viddy-talkie-feely whose hot breath
Flushes the skin on your upper arm,
So real is the performance—
Quickening pulp and ink like Lazarus
Into a culture-dish sample of here-we-are.

Peter Button



We all just got new suits you see, For nothin. We got em at a big picnic, a cookout man, with steaks an inch an a half thick, for all of us, hundreds of em. We always had it made when I worked the docks man. That's why I got in. They musta ripped-off some big joints or somethin cause we always had it made. But I knew I hadda get outa that place. I knew somethin was gonna happen.

ME & JIMMY

BY DAVE YORK

Then this one night you see, my boss Jimmy, he comes knockin open the door, an when I look at him, his clothes are all covered with blood. An I sez, What the hell happened Jimmy? What the hell happened? An he tells me he's wasted this guy. Now blood's gettin all over the place, an my wife, she's f--kin goin nuts, hysterical like, an so

I go an get Jimmy my new suit. An he's tellin me he's gonna hide at my place. I see his gun an think no way am I gettin involved man. An I tell him he hasta get outa town or state or somethin. So he tells me he wants my car. An I sez I'll give it to him too. I mean what the f--k could I do? An then he tells me he wants me ta go with him. Help him if the cops try ta f--k with him. An my wife starts losin it man. I have ta go an she can't take it cause Jimmy's goin berserk for me ta do somethin.

So man, Jimmy's drivin us an we're doin a hundred an ten outa town an wham! we slam this car, an I see it slidin sideways blockin the highway lanes an all, an all these other cars swervin man, f--kin fishtailin all over, an that hit car just slams straight in the guardrail an comes all apart, pieces shootin up in the air like a f--kin flocka birds! Then I start losing it man. I tries ta tell Jimmy ta be cool, but that f--ker was crazy. I never seen no one crazier. Then I see the cops comin head on at us an they pass an their car spins around sideways with them tires lockin up an squealin, an they start comin at us, chasin us man. Jimmy sees em an goes right off the road an on this dirt road. An I can't see nothin in back of us then. An Jimmy cuts off the lights, an I can't see nothin in front of us neither. Jimmy goes off the dirt road an we start bouncin up an down in this field. I look at Jimmy an tries ta tell him ta take it easy but there wasn't nothin nobody could tell him, specially now. I knew then that f--ker was insane.

So Jimmy slides the car between this barn an another barn or somethin, an I throw open the door an run an look seein Jimmy disappear. Then I hear the cop's car crackin gravel comin down the road, an I didn't even think man, I just hauled ass in that barn climbin up in them rafters hidin.

An you know man? Then I had time ta think what I got myself into. First I said, yeah! this is f--kin great! Like television or somethin. Then I thought about a cop blowin a hole through me, an I knew I hadda get outa that place. Hell man, I decided I'd get my kicks on rollercoasters or somethin.

Anyways, I hear the cops outside circlin up an blabbin their brains over which way they're gonna take me. An they come in flashin them lights all over till they see me. Then they all start movin so fast I almost hafta laugh an they grab their guns an point em an yell for me ta get down right now. So I start figurin. They don't have much on me an I'll beat whatever simple shit they give me anyhow. So I move ta get down an the goddamn rafter breaks an I fall in this heap of metal or somethin. An shit! I hear they don't even know where I went to. I see an openin in that barnside man an I just bolt.

An all these goddamn weeds are stickin up holdin me back like walls I gotta keep bustin through ta get somewhere. An man I see them cop car gumballs keep curvin red lines across the field an them sirens wailin from everywhere. An I fall in this ditch. Man I lost it. Turned a f--kin flip!

So I'm lying in this ditch an my goddamn heart's beatin right up in my head. I'm not that far from the barn an they can't see me but I see all these cops jerk-in their flashlights takin turns walkin around my car. An then they start jumpin all over cause Jimmy starts blastin. I watch him just keep shootin the cars fulla holes, goin crazy, yellin, F--kin Pigs! An one of em gets it, an they pull him behind my car. An some cops are movin around in the field gettin in ta Jimmy, an I see a chance to get outa there then.

So I start real quick, an keep lookin back. I see them cops comin in back of Jimmy, an jump him, an him goin f--kin crazy, yellin the whole time they're kickin an beatin the shit outa him. Man they pound him in the head an he just yells more. They can't even hold him down ta get the cuffs on him till more come an jump in. An other cops are just standin there shinin their lights. An I see Jimmy's just all twisted up in blood.

I start walkin all the way around everything in a big circle an along the road, but keepin a little ways away from it cause it's gettin mornin. So I don't have no idea what I'm gonna do but get f--kin home man, an I just keep goin tryin ta get a ride an lookin for cops. An this kid in a pickup doin deliveries says he'll take me anywhere cause he's on company time an has this revolving charge card. So we're goin an we stop at this place an get gas an some breakfast. An he knows everyone in this f--kin joint man. An I hafta sit there an listen to all of them braggin about laying the broads an fightin an drinkin, an my head's hurtin tryin ta catch up to the rest of me. An then, I

remember, I f--kin started likin it! Man, I was all f--kin numb from livin! You know man, there may be a lotta people you think are better than me, them smart types an all. But I've seen some shit man!...Ah, I don't know.

Anyhows, I get home an my ol lady's waited up all night you see, an she asks me what happened an I say hell, I don't even know, an I go ta get cleaned up an all an come out an find she's just let in three of them federal cops. Man, all I did's give em a big smile.

You should've heard all them charges, bout seven of em. They have this warrant for my arrest an say my car's impounded, an they have Jimmy an all. Man I just tell them the first thing in my head, an that's I loaned Jimmy my car. An the way they look, they look at each other real funny like they don't have nothin on me. Then I really smile. I say I'd like ta get my car, an can they give me a ride for it? An they look like I'm jokin with em or somethin an look at each other funny like again. But they give me a ride. An we get there an they take me right ta f--kin Jimmy.

Well Jimmy's in this holdin cell like thing with no ceilin or nothin an he's still yellin his head off. An Jimmy, when he hears me, he starts tryin ta climb out. He gets ta the top an the cops hit him in the head, an he falls back down screamin an yellin. An he keeps doin it, over an over, about two or three more times till the cops go in an pull him out. His face is all smashed, pieces of hair pulled out an stickin to him. An then he doesn't even know who I am. An they drag him down this hall ta someplace. The cops were tryin to get him ta pin somethin on me an Jimmy just went completely f--kin insane.

So then nobody had nothin on me, an I start gettin happy, an alls I know is I hafta get outa this place, I mean the whole f--kin town man. I start thinkin about startin over someplace. Anyways, you know how they finally got me? No. I haven't talked in a month an I still don't f--kin even wanna talk about it. I don't know nothin bout my wife no more. I still can't f--kin believe it! My ol lady an me had it made too. Alls I know is I'm not gonna make nothin complicated. I stay in shape man. All day I do pushups an rest an situps and rest. It's not hard adjustin every day, one day at a time, not makin nothin complicated. I got five years till I'm up, then I get forty more out if I'm lucky. Goddamn! I keep hopin for things ta get good, an when they got good before somethin always f--kin happened. But I gotta keep hopin man, thinkin about workin right. F--k, then when things start lookin like I got it made I gotta start watchin real good so nothin'll happen. I gotta quit makin things complicated. I got five years.

A Woman Writing

Yet the face—
There is no pose.
She sees the painter,
Sees you, and smiles
In immediate, intimate
Loveliness, as if,
Though you interrupt,
She wanted to see you,
Watch you. Patient,
Happy, she can never
Turn her eyes away
To write again
Until you release
Your eyes from hers,
Which you never will,
Jan Vermeer.

Joseph Harrison

A Short Invention

Cherubic young child
pauses
till the metronome
proceeds
and Bach's
dual objective
molds into one form
a steady gait of life
while I
still anxious
for certainty
wait
with an erratic beat.

Laura A. Wright



PHOTOGRAPH BY KIM HAMILL

NOW IS THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT MADE GLORIOUS DRAMA

BY ELIZABETH GREGORY



It is a curious thing, perhaps, to be more impressed by a play in rehearsal (and not even a *dress* rehearsal) than in performance. Nevertheless, it happened to me with the theatre department's production of *Richard III* last spring. Not that there was anything lacking in the performance; quite the contrary, it was pure magic in every sense. The actors, costumes, lighting, set, direction—everything was perfect; and it all came together to create a polished, powerful, dramatic experience.

In stark contrast, the rehearsal I attended had very few of the trappings of the actual performance. In fact, there was little more than the actors and the words of Shakespeare. So what was it about watching a group of t-shirted, blue-jeaned young people wander around a stage mouthing Elizabethan English that made the experience so extraordinary—especially as opposed to an accomplished dramatic production? But perhaps

in stating the question I have answered it—the fact that these actors were a group of t-shirted, blue-jeaned young people and that they could transport me so completely to the court of Richard III, and there enrage, horrify, and enchant me by turns, all without the help of make-up, lights, or costumes, is a real achievement.

The difference is this: in the performance of the play, I saw the skill of the company and the beauty of Shakespeare's play; but in the rehearsal, I saw the miracle of drama itself.

Drama is an art form like no other, in that it brings together the artist, medium, and audience in an extraordinary way. Because the medium is a group of live performers, rather than canvas, film, or the printed word, the audience is pulled into the art, transformed from passive spectators to active participants. The three-way engagement of play, actor, and audience is powerful, dynamic, and alive—so much so that every performance is unique; every night there is something different, some new combination to be seen, marveled at, and enjoyed.

This engagement, this meeting of the minds of the playwright,

actor and audience is critical—absolutely essential to the success of the drama. And the key to this union is the imagination. For the play to work, imaginative energy must be supplied from all three sources. If one area is lacking, the others must compensate in order to come up with the magic total that constitutes a successful dramatic experience.

The element of this dramatic



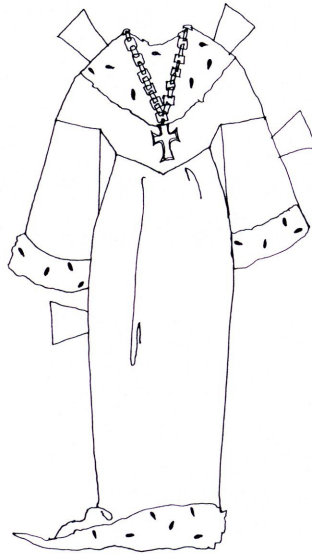
trinity which is most often overlooked, whose importance, and obligation, is most often underestimated, is the audience. An audience must do more than walk into a theatre, sit down, and manage to keep their eyes open. They must want to be entertained, to be transported. They must wish to see a castle in a styrofoam backdrop and a king in a college student. They must elevate themselves from their own reality to the imaginative reality of the play.

When the house lights are down and the actors are resplendent in costume and make-up, this part is easy. It is when the costumes aren't there, the stage isn't set, or the actors stumble a bit over their lines, that the audience's part becomes a bit more difficult and the art of drama is most severely tested. But it is also the time when the interdependence of the elements of the trinity is most obvious—and the experience most joyful and rewarding.

But to return to my example of the *Richard III* rehearsal: my roommate, Katherine, Queen Elizabeth in the play, had asked me to accompany her to rehearsal one night, partly as a reward for my helping her to learn her lines and partly to see if I could follow the action and understand the speeches. Naturally, being an English major and Shakespeare worshipper, I jumped at the chance—I was quite anxious to see how the Bard would fare at this lazily sprawling Southern university.

As we made our way to the theatre in the late afternoon sunlight, one of my long-cherished assumptions about actresses, and the theatre in general, was destroyed. I had always associated arriving at a theatre with fans at the stage door and limousines gliding through the night, but here we were, walking across Samford Avenue in broad daylight, and not a fan in sight! Once inside the

building, Katherine took me back to the dressing rooms and showed me the crowns she was making out of plaster, gold paint, and plastic jewels. Very quickly, all my illusions about the grand mystery of acting and the reality of props and scenery were being shattered.



Katherine then donned one of the long robes that the female characters wore to accustom themselves to the length and weight of the gowns they would wear in performance. These rehearsal robes, though, were exceedingly long, and strongly resembled gigantic, electric-blue potato sacks belted at the waist—another expectation crushed.

Then we went out into the front of the theatre where the director, the script adviser, the frenzied stage manager, and assorted crew members were already sitting and chatting among themselves. I found a seat; while Katherine and the rest of the cast hurriedly took their places backstage, I patiently waited, mainly to see if my doubts about a college performance of Shakespeare would prove justified. I couldn't have been more wrong.

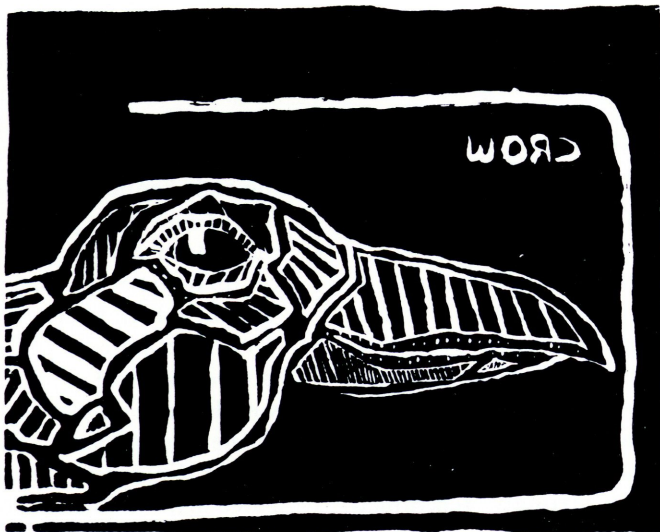
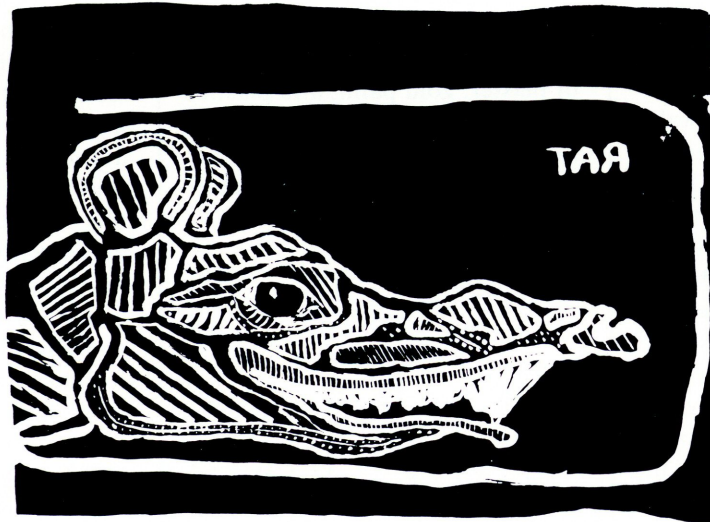
From the moment Richard, clad in shorts and tennis shoes, uttered the famous "Now is the winter of our discontent," the magic of

drama took over. The young man in Nikes became the bitter, deformed Richard of Gloucester, who would kill his young nephews and usurp his brother's throne, and did so with such wit and power he took my breath away. The girls in blue potato sacks became the queens Richard tortured; the young men in jeans the nobles he betrayed; and the little boys in hiking shorts and Izod shirts the princes whose fortunes he usurped. For almost three hours the magic was sustained, as the houses of Lancaster and York struggled, and Richard worked his evil; until the blond and holy Henry Tudor delivered England from Richard's satanic grasp.

It was only as the actors left the stage and came out front to hear the director's notes that I realized what had happened. As unbelieving and skeptical as I had been at first, I had been pulled into that play—transported to fourteenth-century England. I had mourned with Elizabeth for her sons in the Tower, despaired with Richard on Bosworth Field, and celebrated with Henry Tudor as he ushered in the new age of peace and prosperity for England—I had participated in the miracle of drama. The tremendous energy and beauty I felt then is breath-taking even in memory; it is the intense feeling of pleasure one gets from a true work of art.

And this is the kind of pleasure all drama can impart. It is a unique and inspiring affirmation of human creativity; it transforms the imagination into a living, breathing force—right before our eyes. And only through drama can this miracle happen; only through drama can we bring a little bit of Tudor England to Auburn, Alabama, and a little bit of magic into our own lives.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
FREDDA BERLIN



PRINTS BY STAN REYNOLDS

By the Sea

At a table circled by a hedge
of tongued hibiscus, I drank Tecate
and bit into the bitter lime.
There a bent campesina offered me
a henequen hammock for forty pesos.
Her elaborate dress was stitched
with inherited needles, thread bartered
with osprey feathers or a basket of lemons.
The desperate leather of her face implied:
"Please buy. My husband drinks mezcal
for love of the worm. Nightly he begs me
for the last length of my hemp
to connect his neck to the rafter."
Grief textured her complexion,
and as I decided that to buy would be
almost to save someone's life,
a guard barking harsh Spanish drove her off.

Now I sit again by the sea, salting my lime,
listening for the distant slam
of a kicked cane chair, creak
of a palm rafter, the reticent
stretching of the merciless hemp
with the weight of a life almost saved.

R. T. Smith

GAME TABLE EARTH

Auburn Responds to the Nuclear Freeze

BY WILLIAM DAVID HARTSHORN

The setting—an unfamiliar city street packed with four thousand or more restless demonstrators. Face-paint expressions glare from beneath a patch-work of placards. Wedged tightly in their midst, a broken row of helmeted police push forward with plexiglass shields and make way for two slow-moving riot control vehicles. Mounted atop each is a powerful water cannon that, with periodic bursts, forces the crowd further back from a U.S. military installation.

West Berlin, Bremerhaven, Hamburg, Madrid, Stockholm—these are but a few of the West European cities where nuclear freeze demonstrators have protested U.S. deployment of cruise missiles. In June of 1982 close to 1 million people gathered in New York City to call for a bilateral nuclear freeze and a reversal of the U.S./Soviet arms race. Three million people took part in 100,000 smaller demonstrations throughout Europe late last October.

Never before have so many people come together and against

one another over one issue; never before has the prospect of one war more immediately threatened the existence of everyone on the globe.

The terms of resolve are, to a large extent, embedded somewhere within the complex military and political networks of the world's two most powerful nations. The game table is Planet Earth, and an ominous number of the chips are on that table.

What are the real issues here? How do terms such as *kill probability*, *mutually assured destruction* and *overkill* fit in with the tactical and strategic policies of the two superpowers? Which is the most reasonable option: a defensive build-up of nuclear armaments or a bilateral nuclear freeze?

These are questions which, until recently, have been given scant attention on the Auburn campus. Thus far two student organizations have stepped forward to voice their opinions—the College Republicans and UCAM (United Campuses for the Prevention of Nuclear War).

Mark Long, president of

UCAM, and Ritchie Pickron, vice-chairman of the College Republicans, give antithetical responses to every question pertaining to the Freeze movement. Their opposing replies are, in many ways, reflective of the two major U.S. viewpoints in the freeze dilemma. The following are but three of the many areas of concern debated by the anti- and pro-freeze advocates.

Regarding the question of parity (equally destructive nuclear capability), Long states that both the U.S. and the Soviet Union already have more than enough nuclear weaponry to annihilate the human race. This conception is what is referred to by the Department of Defense as *overkill*. "It's not that we're behind in the arms race," Long explains, "it's just that the Department of Defense doesn't like the position of no longer having a strong advantage."

Pickron disagrees. He looks at the U.S position in the arms race as a critically disadvantaged one.

"Seventy-five percent of our nuclear force is more than 15 years outdated. The Soviets, by comparison, have amassed 75 percent of their weaponry in the past five years. They don't want parity; they want superiority."

The discrepancy between these two responses is not exclusive to student opinion. Indeed, similar arguments have been heard from the Pentagon. Recent technological advances (and proposals for new weapons) made by the U.S. Department of Defense have been used to match arguments from the State Department which points to the recent Soviet build-up as cause for an increase in U.S. arms stockpiling.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger (before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 29, 1982), when asked whether he would exchange U.S. forces for the Soviet Union's, answered, "I would not for a moment exchange anything, because we have an immense edge in technology."

Secretary of State Alexander Haig disagrees. Less than a month prior to Weinberger's statement he was quoted as having said that a nuclear freeze at this point would "reward a decade of unilateral Soviet build-up and penalize the U.S. for a decade of unilateral restraint." (*Washington Post*, April 7, 1982)

Dr. Thomas Dickson, professor and acting head of the Auburn Political Science Department, spent 16 years working with the State Department. He looks at the controversy over the parity aspect of the freeze in this way: "In arguing a position, too often people start out with a supposition, and then they go out and find whatever data is going to support them. As one writer said of the national security issue during the Viet Nam War, 'We don't have a dialogue—what we have is a dual monologue on national security.'"

Dr. Mike Urban, the department's leading Soviet specialist looks skeptically at the parity disparity, saying, "The notion of missile for missile, warhead for warhead comes pretty close to being the logic of fools or the arithmetic of idiots." Having done extensive studies on Russia's political history, Urban believes that the Soviets have not forgotten the horror of war. World War II alone left them with a death toll of 20 million people. Consequently, the Soviets have developed a hyper-defensive posture that Urban refers to as a "siege mentality." They are poised to meet any threat that could jeopardize their own national security.

"The last thing that would seem to be intelligent," Urban elaborates, "would be for one side to put the other side at such a disadvantage that it would do something precipitous. In building more nuclear arms you're not really getting ahead of them; you're just getting that much closer to oblivion. In this sense there can be no talk of out-gunning the Soviet Union as a policy of national defense."

Whether or not a bilateral, verifiable nuclear freeze would be an acceptable approach to arms reduction is the next point of debate. Pickron believes that UCAM and other proponents of the freeze movement have included the term *bilateral* as a deceptive ploy designed to attract those who would oppose a unilateral freeze. "They say bilateral, but at the same time they push for legislation in Washington to stop development of the MX and the B-1 Bomber."

Long denies the validity of this claim, saying, "A unilateral freeze is a unilateral surrender' is one of the most common arguments we hear. But we don't advocate a unilateral freeze—that would be political suicide." If a unilateral U.S.

freeze were enacted, the Soviets would probably continue to amass nuclear weaponry. The U.S.S.R. would then be able to intercept all U.S. offensive strike capabilities as well as most U.S. defensive measures.

Verifiability is another element in this aspect of the freeze proposal that Pickron views as an unrealistic proposition. Short of on-site inspection, he says, there is no way to verify a nuclear weapons freeze. "A camera in an intelligence satellite cannot see through a warehouse roof to tell if there are missiles inside. Until the freeze is made verifiable by on-site inspection, then I can't support a freeze."

Long's reaction to the verifiability of the freeze is that, "It would be impossible to bring an ICBM on line and deploy it without our knowing about it. The U.S. has satellite cameras accurate enough to read a license plate in Red Square. There *are* long range problems with verification," he continues, "but the point is that no political proposal is airtight. We need to put the brakes on. If the Soviets violate the treaty we can resume the build-up. The freeze isn't a final solution to the problem. It's a beginning."

The third and last question to be addressed in this article concerns trust. How reliable would the Soviets be if we signed a freeze agreement with them?

An ABC News survey (March 29, 1982) reported that 80 percent of those polled believe that the Soviet Union would try to cheat on any freeze agreement. Pickron points to this statistic and to Soviet violations of past treaties and agreements as support for the College Republicans' urgent defense of the arms build-up. Some examples of these violations include the Helsinki Accord on Human Rights, the U. N. Biological-Chemical Warfare Convention

(e.g. yellow rain in Afghanistan and Laos), the Threshold Ban Treaty and the Kennedy-Kruschev Agreement of 1962.

They go on to stress that "there is no international agency or supranational government with the authority or power to oversee and enforce compliance with arms control treaties. The freeze proponents are asking us to risk our national survival on Soviet trustworthiness."

Long addressed these claims by pointing to a Defense Department report that reads, "Soviet compliance under 14 arms control agreements signed since 1959 has been good."

"You can trust the Russians," said Long, "to act in their national self-interest. If effected, a bilateral freeze would be in their best interest as well as ours." The threat of U.S. technologically advanced nuclear capabilities, an unstable economy, and the fact that they don't want to risk a nuclear holocaust any more than we do are all reasons why a freeze is in the Soviet national interest.

Paul Warnke, U.S. arms negotiator under President Carter, said (*New York Times*, March 21, 1982)

that during arms talks with the Russians, "I had the feeling that the Soviets were more serious than we were . . . not because they're nice guys, but because they recognize that their political system is infinitely more fragile than ours."

And so the point-counterpoint scenario continues. Having seen two perspectives of the freeze issue on paper, the only thing that becomes clear is that nothing is clear. Where one position documents current Defense Department statistics, the other position counteracts with conflicting State Department sources. In turn, one side points to the Soviet "seige mentality" as a volatile Soviet posture, not to be aggravated with unnecessary nuclear build-up, while the other claims that until the U.S. convinces the Soviets that we have and will use the first strike capability, there will be no meaningful reduction talks with the U.S.S.R. Where does it end?

The answer to that question could, no doubt, be acquired from any one of the millions of West European demonstrators. Their plea is not a new one. It must end where it began—with acknowledgement of the bottom-line

question, "Can we prevent a nuclear war?"

This is the common point upon which both sides of the controversy have built their arguments. However, it appears all too often that the primary aims of each group are merely to undermine the claims of the other. Emphasis has lately shifted from the issue itself to the barrage of facts that surround it. The impending urgency of the situation has, as a result, been lost in a confusing cloud of statistics and technical jargon.

With 3,000 miles between us and the West European deployment sites, it is dangerously easy to direct our attentions elsewhere—to turn off the evening news or to turn the page and read a more pleasant article. As a nation we are in grave danger of distancing ourselves even further from the problem. But the "safety in numbers" rationale no longer applies. It is time for us, as members of one of the world superpowers, to speak out. We must ask whether or not we *can* prevent a nuclear war, because, as Urban stresses, "If we can't prevent one, then there are no more questions."

Glossary of Terms

Bilateral nuclear freeze—an agreement whereby both negotiating parties consent to halt further production and deployment of nuclear weaponry.

Verifiable nuclear freeze—a stipulation in the freeze agreement which provides for assurance (on-site inspections, satellite surveillance, etc.) that the production and deployment of nuclear weaponry has been stopped and remains stopped.

Mutually assured destruction—a scenario between two forces in which each has the ability to destroy the other.

First strike capability—the capability to destroy all enemy nuclear missiles before retaliatory action is taken.

Intercontinental ballistic missile—a missile which is powered and guided for most of its ascent but which is free falling in its descent. Its effective range is enough to span continents (i.e. MX, Titan, Minute Man and SS-18 missiles).

Countersilo weapon—a guided missile designed solely to destroy unlaunched enemy missiles still in their silos (underground housings).

Multiple warhead capacity, or Yield—the yield (number of nuclear bombs attached) for each missile varies. A missile with several warheads releases them all before impact and they strike independent targets.

Kill probability—the likelihood that the guided missile will hit its intended target.



Yesterday's Hero

Your dreams.
You live them in the sky
Attached to nothing but the
Space within the womb.
You soar, seek, seduce,
Destroy.
Your jet posters yellow on the wall.
The edges crumble.
Your child smears jelly on
The icon your wife remembers you
By.

Gwen Wilson

DRAWING BY SCOTT LESLEY



Scene: an averagely inelegant bar in the downtown area of any large metropolis, such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, or Auburn.

She: Somehow, this feminist movement, this equal rights campaign, hasn't worked out quite the way I expected it would. Here I am, a modestly successful, moderately attractive, self-sufficient, confident businesswoman in my late twenties, unmarried, unattached, and unhappy. I'm not suggesting that I'm particularly eager for any really serious relationship, understand, but men don't even call me up to ask me out to dinner anymore. Am I that much of a threat to the male ego?

He: Probably to some male egos, yes. But my guess is that to a considerable number of men, men more secure in their own masculinity, you simply appear to be exactly as you describe yourself—self-sufficient.

There are, after all, men who have watched the feminist movement with more than passing interest and who have taken it at face value. That is, they have heard the extremists insist repeatedly that men are unnecessary, that women can make it on their own in this world without male support; then someone like you, extremist or not, goes ahead and proves the proposition by becoming entirely self-sufficient. Men who regard your success as a Q.E.D. are likely to leave you alone on the grounds that they suppose you wish to be left alone.

She: It is true that I value my independence, of course, but I don't wish to be left utterly alone, no; I want the equality I have achieved in my professional life to extend to my social life as well.

He: The obvious solution is to give a man a call and invite him to dinner.

LOVE, SEX, and the crisis of IMPECUNIOSITY

BY ANONYMOUS

She: I've done that. Several times. It isn't very satisfactory. It might work all right *after* you've gotten to know someone fairly well, but as an initial overture it is decidedly dull. For some reason it is difficult to infuse such an arrangement with an aura of romance. I wonder why that is. I mean, I end up with rather uninspired conversation over a dinner I am obliged to pay for myself and a handshake at the door. I know it is arrogant of me to say so, but I never imagined that a whole lot of men would say "no" when I invited them in for a nightcap. (Quit smirking. I didn't mean I'd invite a whole lot of men in all at *once*, you scoundrel.) But, anyway, I always supposed that I'd have some trouble

closing the door and keeping them out. But lately those men I've asked out have declined the traditional post-prandial—ah—refreshment, if you take my meaning. What gives?

He: It seems to me that you're experiencing the social equality you've been seeking. Women have enjoyed the option of saying "no" for a long time now, for a variety of reasons, but it has been no great secret that a majority of women have had, by necessity, to make hard, practical choices.

She: What do you mean?

He: Well, consider: barred by social and economic sanctions from entering professions, women have virtually been forced to assess a man's prospects of success in supporting her financially before accepting his advances at all. For her, marriage was a business proposition as much as it was an affair of the heart. Men are just now beginning to see the same aspect of romance from their side of the fence.

She: I'm supposed to support a house-husband? Not on your life. I don't even want to get married especially; I want to be wined and dined on a Saturday night, and I want—well, you know. A little intimacy, I guess.

He: Well, I think that comes pretty close to the point exactly. Men have been accused ever since the incident at Eden of wanting nothing more than to coax some innocent young girl off to bed without benefit of matrimony and without the burden of subsequent responsibility. Some men doubtlessly do have nothing more than that on their minds, but the female belief that this is pervasively the case has led, in the past, to the need for women to say "no" to all romantic overtures which have not had some prospect of leading to a respectable, financially advantageous marriage. In fact, men have often been summarily dismissed from consideration on the brutally unromantic grounds that they appeared to the prospective mate to be unable to keep her in the manner to which she had grown accustomed, if you recall the unpleasant phrase. Actually, it's that kind of treatment which does indeed do some fairly serious damage to the male ego—in fact, why he should *not* feel some measure of humiliation and loss of self-esteem only the female mind, in all its complex subtlety, can explain. But, in any case, it was pretty hard for a man to sustain much sense of romantic abandon under those circumstances either, without indulging in some pretty ferocious masochistic tendencies, such as writing love-sonnets to the wind.

She: But now both men *and* women are self-

sufficient, so you can't be suggesting, surely, that the tables have turned.

He: Not turned 180 degrees, it is true, but the tables have shifted sufficiently (to borrow your cliché for a moment) to allow men to exercise the options which in the past belonged exclusively to women.

She: Why should they, though?

He: Should they what?

She: Exercise the options, I mean. What's to be gained?

He: Fortunes.

She: Say again, please?

He: Fortunes. Women have served notice that they are not content to be domestic servants in exchange for the creature comforts. That's fine, but it has led men to look a little differently at what a woman has to offer a reasonably lasting relationship. It seems, these days, to be the *man* who is looking for marriage, and he is casting about for an advantageous one, just as women used to do; a professional for a wife can raise his standard of living appreciably.

She: How repulsively crass. Whatever happened to romance?

He: Consider this for romance: let us suppose a man earning \$25,000 a year, a quite modest income these days, yes?

She: All right.

He: Fine. In the days when a woman's work was home-making, her standard of living rose from zero to \$25,000 a year when she married such a man; his remained the same. Now, on the other hand, let us suppose a man and woman *each* making \$25,000 a year; should these two people marry, her standard of living doubles to \$50,000 a year, but, not incidentally, so does his.

She: Instant fortune, huh?

He: Well, be fair. An increased standard of living through marriage is nothing new for women, who, when they married in the past, adopted the standard set by the man's wealth, prospects, and initiative. Hence, speaking of being fair, women's caution and concern for their futures was quite understandable.

She: That's a gimme; you just want me to believe that you're being unbiased.

He: I simply want you to understand the male

point of view in this. The possibility of an increased standard of living poses an entirely new consideration to men, except, of course, for those men who have always been fortune-hunters, marrying rich widows, wealthy heiresses, and the like.

She: All you've said is very neat and tidy, and it makes, I suppose, a mildly witty theory to bandy about at cocktail parties, but I don't think it's true, and, more to the point, I don't see how it explains why men aren't asking me out to dinner anymore.

He: They are not asking you out to dinner because, charming and lovely as you are, there are better prospects in the field, from the financial point of view. Men are simply beginning to exercise the option that women have been exercising forever. That is, men can afford to be a little more choosy, to say "no, thank you" to a woman whose economic condition is not as attractive as could be wished.

She: So it turns out that men are just as cynical as we've always thought them to be, after all.

He: Not exactly, no. They are growing *more* cynical than they have ever been; they are just beginning to achieve the standard of cynicism women have set by shopping around for financial security. I believe this is called equality.

She: I'd call it exploitation, but then you'd just turn that around and claim that women have been exploiting men all along.

He: No, I wouldn't say that, because that isn't true. Marriage, like everything else in life, is a trade-off. Setting aside love and romance and companionship and all the other imponderables, what a man used to expect of a marriage, practically speaking only, was a comfortable home. He wasn't pleased to spend a long day pursuing a career and then to come home to take care of domestic chores on top of it. And yes, there is no denying that that meant he expected a wife to cook, clean, launder, and otherwise generally keep house. That was the trade-off. Women eventually found it an unacceptable trade, rose up against it, defeated it, and set out upon careers of their own. The revolution has had far-reaching consequences.

She: About all of which I am presently to hear, yes?

He: As you wish.

She: Buy me another drink first.

He: Buy your own drink; you make more money than I do.

She: Ah, romance. Sigh. All right. Proceed to the

far-reaching consequences. I can hardly wait.

He: My pleasure. First of all, women made an interesting discovery of a few facts of life which bachelors have known for centuries, namely, that it really is no fun at all to do everything—pursue career, keep house, and try to socialize—without a bit of help in some quarters. It has been a source of some small amusement to me to hear women bitch and moan about how difficult it is for them to do with their newfound freedom, as though it were any easier for unmarried men—but I guess that just shows how cruel and cynical a man can really be.

She: How cruel and cynical *one* man can be, yes.

He: Well, I quite agree that it *isn't* easy to do everything for oneself, but I don't understand why it should be any the more difficult for a woman than for a man.

She: Shows how little you know about women.

He: Or how little women know about themselves.

She: I really don't think that's a problem.

He: On the contrary, it's the *entire* problem. It used to be that men couldn't figure out what women wanted; now women can't figure it out either, and I think that pretty much leaves us all without an authority on the subject.

She: Oh, you seem to be having no difficulty with it at all; please continue, Mr. Authority, sir.

He: Very well. Men and women alike, then, are left to take care of both professional and household matters on their own, unless they can afford to hire a domestic, which brings us to a curious parenthetical.

She: Do tell.

He: (Is it not odd that there seem to be plenty of women out there willing to do domestic work if they get paid for it, cash up front, on a determined wage scale? And then they go home and do their own domestic work. In short, they make careers of domestic service. Seems to me they might very well do better by getting married.)

She: (They probably *are* married, you dull tool. They're hiring out as domestics because they stupidly married men who don't make enough money to keep them in the manner to which they've grown accustomed. Please buy me a drink and get us out of this idiotic parenthetical.)

He: (Buy your own drink.)

She: (Sigh. If I do buy my own drink, will you

agree to release me from this simple-minded parenthetical?)

He: (It's a deal.)

She: (There. Paid up.)

He: Very nicely done.

She: Thank you.

He: You're welcome.

She: Just get on with it, please.

He: Right. The point is that in a marriage between professionals, neither partner is going to be delighted to do all the domestic work upon arriving home from career work. To get on with the far-reaching consequences, then, this state of affairs opens up some novel possibilities to the male.

She: Such as? she asked, breathlessly expectant.

He: Glad you asked. Such as this: if her standard of living is going to benefit by marriage, as it always has done in past arrangements, and if she is *not* going to provide a comfortable home for me, just what is it that she has to offer me by way of an acceptable trade-off?

She: Answer: a higher standard of living for him in return.

He: You have a razor-sharp mind.

She: Yes, extraordinary powers of perception, to say nothing of analytical genius.

He: Just so.

She: Why can't I get a date for Saturday night?

He: You are not high-prospect marriage material.

She: I don't want to get married. Why don't you listen?

He: I do listen. What you want has nothing to do with what you're going to get. Your wishes are matters of profound indifference.

She: How nice. Things haven't really changed at all, have they?

He: Indeed they have. Men are not snarling and growling to haul you off to bed—that's the first change. And they are not foaming at the mouth with uncontrollable desire because they are afraid you might want to get married—that much has not changed, no, but the underlying motive is radically altered. It is now the *man* who is looking about him, but the terms of the marriage trade-off have shifted so that you, poor dear, are not a very attractive prospect. From the pragmatic point of view, a career

woman has only summation to offer a man: my salary plus her salary equals what standard of living? You don't make enough money, I'm afraid.

She: Then why don't you buy me a drink, you bastard?

He: Because it would suggest that I am plying you with liquor with the object of hustling you off to bed later on.

She: And you're not?

He: No, I'm not.

She: Oh. Why not?

He: You don't make enough money, I'm afraid.

She: Oh, yeah, I forgot about that part. Let me buy myself another drink, then. Okay. Carry on. Say again why it is that I can't get a date for Saturday night; I can't quite follow that.

He: You just have to work harder.

She: I'm not sure I like the implications of that. Be explicit, please.

He: No sordid implications whatever; you must work harder professionally in order to rise in the ranks and earn promotions, which are, crucially, normally accompanied by pay-raises. Or work overtime. You've simply got to make more money. You make—what?—roughly \$27,000 a year now, right?

She: Roughly.

He: And you are roughly 28 years old, correct?

She: None of your business.

He: True, but it's your business we're talking about here. Roughly 28, right?

She: Very roughly.

He: Right. You would be interested, then, in a man of—oh, approximately 27 to 37 years of age, yes?

She: Roughly.

He: And men in that age bracket are likely to be seeking a woman of about 23 to 40 years old.

She: Roughly?

He: Very roughly.

She: The point?

He: The women younger than you probably make a little less money than you do, but there are an awful lot of single career women 30 to 35 years old who make a whacking great pile of money.

She: How many?

He: Thousands.

She: How much more money?

He: Thousands.

She: Who drank my drink?

He: Buy yourself another.

She: Thanks, I will.

He: Not at all.

She: And all of this means what?

He: It means you can't get a date for Saturday night because men are busy sizing up the high potential trade-off material. They're calling women who are making \$40,000 a year, and they are wining them and dining them and trying to coax them into the sack because they very much want to shoulder the burden of the consequences of having to manage to live on another 40 grand a year—they want to marry

these women and bump their standards of living off the graph. On \$75,000 or \$80,000 a year, one can afford a domestic, among other things.

She: Do you think I'm pretty?

He: Ravishing.

She: Will you take me home now, have another drink at my place, and spend the night?

He: No.

She: Will you take me to dinner Saturday night and pay for it and everything and then take me home and come in for a nightcap and see what develops?

He: Delighted.

She: Thank you. And will you call a cab for me now?

He: Call your own cab. You make more money than I do.

To You We Will Not Say Good-bye
For Rosebud

When you came to us you wore your print dress
and there was enough time.

You brought us things we always knew
but we had forgotten

the blinds can be opened
there will be a picnic

there is enough time.
You brought us our names

we thought they were easy to say
they took no time at all

until you came to us in your simple dress
saying your own perfect name

we knew that too
and the voices outside the window

and the way to the lake in the gardens
where you tried not to tell us good-bye.

Jim Allen

Ripeness Is All

You might fancy that you knew her then,
While still her heart was soft,
Something warmer than a cicatrix,
Disburdened of the heavy tissue,
Unsapped by ruthless efforts to give
A something she had not to give,
But which always brought her to this final issue—

And you might fancy that you knew her
Every gesture and every motive
In a time when affectation had not robbed her every gesture
Of meaning, and in a time, perhaps before that,
When she had motives,
And could tell you what they were, with candor,
Unsuspecting of the trap—

You might fancy that you know her
Now, with dust in her mouth,
Splintered to the bone,
Spent,
Her heart a handful of dry leaves.

And yet—
She is not now as she was then,
Snakes of memory twist her brain,
And truth, which once she envied so,
Drops only from her lips
And is bought and sold with her kisses.

anonymous



PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC DOWELL

A BETRAYAL BY HANK RAULERSON

They sat close together on the end of the dock, the boy very straight and erect and the girl leaning toward him slightly, and watched the rain coming toward them across the lake. Out over the lake the sky was dark and close, and the rain was a very solid gray wall, moving slowly. There was a good wind blowing and it turned the water out in the lake hard and gray. It was an afternoon storm of the late summer on a lake somewhere in Florida. You could smell the rain coming.

"You can smell it coming," the boy said to the girl.

"I know," she said. She moved a little closer to him and drew her knees up under her chin and hugged them tightly as if to keep from shivering. "It smells wonderful." She shook her dark hair back from her face, a movement not quite exaggerated, rested her chin on her knees and looked at the approaching storm out of very round, very dark eyes. The boy sat, if anything, a trifle straighter.

"They aren't coming," the girl said, suddenly. "I mean if they were *coming* they would have already *been* here. Right?"

"Yeah," the boy agreed.

"I'm glad," she said, defiantly.

"Me too," he said, bravely.

They sat there a minute, bound together by their mutual defiance and scorn.

"I mean what gets me," the girl said, "is the way they always say they're coming and then they never show up. I mean why they can't just *say* they aren't coming is a mystery to me."

"Maybe they'll show up," the boy said.

"I hope not," the girl said quickly.

The rain was closer now, though still a long way off. It was a very solid gray wall of rain that slanted out of a slightly darker sky. Waves slapped hard against the dock or made sucking noises as they missed and went

under it, sometimes conspiring to send jets of water up through the cracks. There was a small boat with an outboard motor tied down the dock in the boathouse, and the waves pushed the boat against the dock, regularly. You could hear the sound of the rope tightening. It was a very natural, even necessary sound in the wind and the rain and waves.

"I have an idea," the girl said brightly. "Let's not go inside. Let's sit right here on the dock, and watch the storm come, and dangle our legs in the water and let it rain all over us."

Al looked at her. Al was the boy's name. "You want to?" he asked.

"We *have* to, now," she said, smiling. "I'll go in and get us another beer." Her beer stood half-full on the dock beside her. Al looked at it.

"O.K.," he said.

The girl got up and walked down the dock to the cabin. Al sat there and watched the rain coming. He felt strangely warm and secure with the storm coming, and at the same time a fear, unformulated, rested like a weight in the back of his mind, the warmth washing over him in waves and between the waves the fear jutting out like a black finger of rock in the ocean. He remembered things, the images sharp and clear but unordered, all running together, he, nine or ten, on the dock, the smell of rain coming, the chill in the air, and swimming in the strangely warm water, and under the dock, the waves bad, the dock very close overhead, so close you had to turn your head sideways to breathe, the rain loud on the dock, the smell of rain-soaked wood, grabbing your knees and curling yourself into a ball, very tight and small, bumping eyes closed against the bottom, the water moving you back and forth gently, your hair standing out from your head in the water.

The door slammed, and then he felt her on the dock,

walking. Suddenly, and without any explanation, he felt that he loved her. He thought about her, about the way she walked, her feet pointing outward at a slight angle. He thought about the way she would dive into the water and come up smiling, her hair neatly parted by the water. He thought about the way she suddenly had ideas, like sitting out on the dock in the rain, and all this warm and then washing away, leaving the fear, cold and stark and unmistakable.

The girl came up with the beer and stood there, behind him. She was the kind of girl that would come up to you and just stand there, smiling. She had a shirt on over her bathing suit. Al didn't look at her.

"They're cold," she said, and pressed one of the beers against his defenseless back. "See?"

Unmoved, he accepted the beer and immediately took a long drink from it. He felt his Adam's apple moving self-consciously up and down as he drank. The girl slipped under the wooden rail he was sitting on and sat down on the floor of the dock. She sat down hard and her bottom bounced a little.

"Come on," she said, grabbing the toes of his left foot and swinging it back and forth with her hand. "Sit down here." She dropped his foot and kicked her feet in the water, luxuriously. "The water's warm."

Al sat where he was long enough to take another long drink. Then he slid down off the rail and sat down rather gingerly beside her. They both had to lean forward slightly because of the rail. It was about neck high.

"My God, Al," the girl said. "I would have *died* in school today. I mean think of chemistry. Think of trig. If I *graduate* this year it'll be a *miracle*."

"I know what you mean," Al said. He did, too.

"I love this place," she said, looking around as though at a well-furnished room.

"It's all right," said Al, modestly. "We've got bats in the dock."

"What?"

"There's bats in the dock. In the boathouse there. You know that smell. That's them. They're just little fruit bats. I mean they're nothing to worry about."

"Oh."

They sat there on the end of the dock and drank the beer out of green bottles and dangled their legs in the water. The water was warm and exciting on their legs. They kissed each other successfully, neither one falling in the water.

"Well," said Al, flatly.

"No, we can't," the girl said.

"Yes, we can."

"No, no, we can't."

"Yes, we can."

"No, Al, no, we can't."

"Why not?" Al demanded.

"You know why." She looked at him seriously, almost sadly, the whites of her eyes showing.

Al looked at the lake in front of him.

"Is it O.K.?" she asked, looking away from him.

"No," he said.

They sat close together, neither one speaking, and watched the rain coming. It was very close now. The first drops hit, huge and far apart in the water. The rain was very cold. It offered a very real contrast to the warmth of the water.

Al felt quite happy. He was a little drunk and very much relieved. Gratitude surged through him, warmly. It burned his ears and made his eyes water. He was very lucky. He was very lucky to have a girl like that. He sat there and watched the tall grass moving out in the lake. It was raining harder around them now and the gray wall of rain was moving very fast. Al could see the water jumping and boiling under the rain.

Then the rain hit.

They were inside the wall, the rain cold and hard and stinging and loud in the water, and they were breathing hard, trying to catch their breath in the cold and wetness of it. They were soaked through instantly, as though they had dived into a very cold, very gray pool. They sat close together, their heads down, huddled against the rain.

Soon it was raining less hard, though still steadily, and Al could see the tall grass out in the lake, green and moving in the gray water. Something inside him was very hard and tight, and he watched the lake and the grass and the waves almost desperately. He sat there for a long time, unmoving, looking out at the lake through the rain, his abdominal muscles painfully contracted as though the thing in his chest were a lump of ice and would melt if he relaxed his hold on it.

"Let's go inside, Al," the girl said suddenly, from very close beside him. She covered her eyes with her hand as she looked at him as though shielding them from the sun. Al looked at her, blankly. "Come on," she said, standing up and pulling him up by the arm. Al stood up quickly and they walked, then ran, down the dock to the house.

Al sat on the floor with a towel around his waist, his back against the couch. The girl sat in a chair, her legs crossed under her, half-facing him. She was dressed and had a towel in her lap and was combing her hair.

Al felt a certain obligation to try to explain it to her. It was an obligation. He didn't love her. The rain had washed all that out of him.

"Have you ever," he began. "I mean, maybe you've seen something before, maybe you've seen it a hundred times, but this time you really *see* it, I mean you really see how it *is*. And you realize that's all there is, that there's nothing outside of it anywhere in the world."

Like the storm today. I mean I've seen storms before." He looked at her quickly.

"I'm not sure I know exactly what you mean, Al," she said, leaning her head over to give the comb a better angle.

"When we were kids," he said, in a slightly different voice, "our parents would bring us over here and of course everybody would bring a friend so there were always about fifty million kids everywhere, and at night we all slept in that big back room with all the beds." He took a drink. He felt her eyes on his face, but he didn't look at her. "And all the grown-ups would be out here, or out on the dock, with the usual party going on. And we'd all be playing ping-pong or jumping around on the beds or something, and you could hear the party going on. I mean the laughing, or a woman screaming if they threw her off the dock, or maybe somebody would drop a glass on the floor. And if you came out here for a drink of water or something, everybody would hug you and kiss you—you know how they are. And I was always nervous and embarrassed and I would try to keep all the kids busy, so they wouldn't notice the noise and all. I was actually fairly hysterical. I mean I would run around doing flips on the beds and stuff, or I would laugh really loud or something to keep their attention. Yeah. And in the morning I would get up real early and come out here

and pick up all the beer bottles and whiskey bottles and throw them in the weeds over there and sort of clean up. It was pretty strange."

He stood up quickly and pointed toward the bathroom by way of explanation. The girl sat very still in her chair, looking at the comb in her lap. Al went into the bathroom and stood there in the dark for a moment. He felt all hollow inside. It was not an altogether unpleasant feeling. He was very sorry for the girl, though. There was nothing he could do about it, of course. It had all just washed out of him. He felt by the door for the light switch, found it, and one of the two lights on either side of the mirror flickered and came on. There was a very large, very dead lizard in the bathtub. It was nearly six inches long. It lay near the drain on its back, all four legs stiffly outstretched. Al looked at the lizard while he urinated. "There's nothing I can do about it," he told it.

When he came out of the bathroom the girl was standing stiffly by the couch, her hands at her sides, her eyes on his face. She had a very determined expression on her face. It was the eyes that Al noticed, very large and dark. She put her hands out to him and he walked toward her mechanically. Then her arms were around his neck, very tight, and she was nodding her head against him. "It's O.K., Al," she said. "It's O.K."

Granted: it is a time that Time reminds
Us of; but in drunken eloquence,
Not tenebral tones, fall celebrates
Itself.

Why should the lambent pink lips
or lucent white napes of my
Azaleas, teasing in violent
New spring,

Have better claim to time
Than the burnished golds or deep
Rich plums of my mums when all contain
My year?

Little consolation in a heavenly calendar.
Flowers fall and wither in the field
Only to announce ghostly blossoms
In death.

Nor will I have my garden shadowed,
A dim reflection of motionless,
Placidly equivalent spheres. All years
At rest.

Must blooms yield to a tyranny of tenses,
Damned by discrete days, isolate sequences?
They have been, are, and will be mine
To come.

Their presence continues on a line of one;
As day is night and spring is fall,
The seasons of my garden extend and live
In Time.

Francis Ginanni

Images Found Riding

Cows graze like stumps
on the clear-cut field.
Brush fires smoke the sky.

The road is cooking,
shimmering with flavor:
heat like singed steam.

The wheel turns,
throwing a spray of sand.
The wind rips clouds and
pines across the sky;
their shadows dance
like children on
the highway.

The sun falls,
a sweating orb.
Twilight rests,
then deepens.

Later, the night is misted
with fragrance.
Heat relents to rest in
a dew-damp psalm
of haze ascending.

Gary Parker

Two The Brow for Camille

Swift and certain rose the canyon-borne thermal.
Thrust past the highland's promontory, the unseen
Wind's skyward climb carried with it
Some subtle urgency—
Through scrub pines, whispers like the harvest scythe.
Well above, scaling the thermal's brow, the hawk's sweep
Aspires, tracing a rust-red crescent,
Etching its slow wing
Before blushes of a settling sun.

Poised there on the canyon's crown,
Only low pines will grow. Backs arched,
Heads lowered to the thermal's last breath of day, they lean
Far with time-worn shoulders
To cliff-rim and clench; affirming
Their rothold on stone.
With dusk down, the wind suspends. Shadowed,
The hunched pines reach rimward, ever
Closer to the edge.

At night fall so the hawk
Will light and with talon grasp
Pine arm, ledge cleft and
Nest. The bird of prey bows—
Pushes its beak snug underwing. Windless,
Neither bough nor feather stirs
As the moon's sharp, white crescent rises,
Arching to merge in star shine
And curve of Earth and sky.

William David Hartshorn



The usual breakfast crowd had gathered at the Courtesy Grille on a rainy fall morning when Sammy Dunn, one of the regulars, walked in and announced that he had seen Mozelle King the night before. The dull hum of dull conversations about deer stands and motor drive from men playing the noble savage over scrambled eggs and coffee grew silent. An assortment of heads under camouflage caps and "John Deere" hats turned. Nobody had seen or heard from Mozelle since the night she ran off with the Chattahoochee Exposition almost a year before. "She gets herself shot out of a cannon. Calls herself 'Cannonball' now. 'Cannonball King,'" Sammy Dunn continued. June Faye Thomas, a waitress wearing a pin that read, "Good morning. I'm a Good Egg," kept pouring coffee from a stainless steel pot, but paused from chewing her Doublemint gum to ask, "Well, what else was there left for Mozelle to do?" On second thought, nobody in the Courtesy Grille was really surprised to hear what Mozelle was doing. The buzz of man-talk resumed and June Faye yelled back to Billy in the kitchen to "change that sunny-side up to a pecan waffle." Then she repeated in an amused voice the name Sammy Dunn had just said, "Cannonball King." She laughed and shook her head, then took Sammy Dunn's order back to Billy.

Even as a young girl, Mozelle Skaggs had had dreams of making something out of herself. The Skaggses were "white trash," and Mozelle was the one member of the family who wanted free of that classification. She decided young that looks were her key.

THE WAITRESS AND THE CIRCUS-WOMAN

BY MARIAN MOTLEY-CARCACHE

When Mozelle was fifteen, the truant officer paid a visit to the Skaggses' house, one of a series of dilapidated houses with unswept yards that Lonnie Skaggs rented to tuck his family away in for a few weeks or months, to see why Mozelle had missed so many days of school. Her mother, Mertis Skaggs, a thin, hollow-eyed woman with no-color hair, motioned toward her daughter with her thumb and said, "Ask Mozelle," and never looked back up from the hoe-cake of cornbread she was turning on the top of an old gas stove. Mozelle promptly answered him that the bus wouldn't wait for her to rat her hair. The truant officer handed Mertis a warning which Mertis stuck in the flame under the hoe-cake. The next year Mozelle quit school and married Earl King.

Besides Mozelle, the Skaggses had two other daughters, twins named Annette and Runette, and an assortment of raw-boned, red-faced boys who suffered from varying degrees of slowness. Even though they were twins, the only physical features that Annette and Runette had in common were short-sightedness and a lack of coordination. They also both loved onions, and, consequently, smelled like dirty hair and onion juice. Where Annette was tall and gawky, Runette was short and chunky. While Annette wore too-short shapeless cotton dresses, Runette wore stretch pants and shiny nylon shells. Because of their problem with balance, once they started walking, they seldom slowed down, but continued at an urgent pace. When they finally stopped, they would wobble and stammer for several minutes, blinking through their thick-lensed glasses, until they got their bearings.

And if Annette and Runette were different, Mozelle didn't even seem to belong to the same family as her sisters. It was often suggested that ole Mertis got Mozelle from somewhere besides Lonnie.

When she married Earl King, Mozelle was sixteen. Earl had a pulpwood truck and a Ford car and he promised Mozelle that they'd live in town. As a wedding gift for Mozelle, Earl made a down payment on a trailer. Mozelle got a job at the Courtesy Grille. That was where she met Sammy Dunn and June Faye and the others who were so interested in hearing about her this rainy fall morning.

With the money she made at the Grille, Mozelle was able to order flashy clothes that she saw advertised in the back of *Photoplay* magazine. The job was rewarding in many ways. Mozelle had good ideas about small improvements for the Grille and her ideas were appreciated. She came up with "the bottomless cup of coffee" with meals, and she also insisted that the Grille install a jukebox, which turned out to be a moneymaker. Mozelle made friends at the Grille, too, and most of them knew nothing about the Skaggses or Mozelle's past. Soon the manager, Bud Jenkins, made Mozelle headwaitress, and she liked to brag, later, that she had served up lunch to the entire Lakeview Bass Club between labor pains. She worked until an hour before Earline and Duke were born. After Mozelle got pregnant, she was too big for her flashy clothes, but every-now-and-then Annette and Runette would appear in what seemed to be ill-fitting hand-me-downs from Mozelle's *Photoplay* days: fishnet hose stretched past their capacity on Runette's fat thighs; hip-hugger bell bottoms that struck Annette mid-buttock at one end and mid-calf at the other; white go-go boots never to be zipped all-the-way up on either twin.

Mozelle went back to the Grille a week after the

twins were born. Earline took after Earl. She was born with a head full of red hair and tiny blue eyes. Duke was born with a full set of teeth and his Aunt Runette's short legs. Some folks said it was a shame that Mozelle paid those babies no more attention than a mama cat would pay ugly kittens; others said it was no wonder. And by the time the twins were born, the very sight of Earl disgusted Mozelle. Soon she quit Earl and the Grille and found a job at the old Alta Vista Motel, out on the highway.

"What else was there left for her to do!" O.K. Cooper disgustingly echoed the question June Faye had asked a few minutes before, as he drug a triangle of buttered toast across his plate, sopping the yellow that had run out of his poached eggs when he violently attacked them with cross-cross motions with his knife and fork. "She could go back out there to the trailer with Earl, if he'd have her, and take care of them kids like a mother ought to. And I reckon he *would* have her back. He did after she took that trailer, or ever what it was, up behind the motel."

The Alta Vista Motel had gone out of business several times, its main attractions having been the pay phone and the Coke machine out front, but then someone, an outsider, had come in and re-opened it. He painted over the peeling pale green paint with pink and wrote "PINK CLOUD MOTEL AND MASSAGE" in big black letters.

When some of the Negro children reported that the outsider had paid them to haul water from the outside faucet to the rooms one whole day, nobody could figure it out. Then the signs started appearing everywhere in a fifty mile radius:

AUTHENTIC ORIENTAL MASSAGE

Follow Hwy 411

Air Cond.

12 Units

Waterbeds!!!

Mozelle wore a kimono and a black plastic name pin that read "Geisha Mozelle King—Room Service." It was often debated what kind of service she provided. She was in charge of about half a dozen Vietnamese girls, most of them disillusioned wives of soldiers who had been sent to Vietnam and back to Fort Benning, Georgia. Arriving in the land of opportunity, many found a trailer park, a mortgaged Camaro, and little else. The lucky ones were neglected, the unlucky ones abused. Six ended up at the Pink Cloud.

Everybody felt sorry for Earl, but he never said a word against Mozelle. It was obvious that he still worshipped her. He was both father and mother to Earline and Duke since Mozelle had moved in a camper out back of the Pink Cloud.

After the motel was busted, Vietnamese girls

could be seen walking in twos or threes all up and down the highway. Mozelle disappeared for a while, but, out in the country, Annette and Runette could be seen in thongs and kimonos, waving at passing cars from the hood of one of the many wrecks Lonnie had drug into the yard. Annette's kimono struck her mid-thigh; Runette's wouldn't meet in the front. Both twins' toes and heels hung off the thongs. A family on its way to Florida almost got hit by a moving van when it slammed on brakes to look at them.

Mozelle's name leaked out in association with the Pink Cloud, and when she couldn't be found to interview, the town newspaper sent a reporter fifty miles out in the country to locate the Skaggses and ask them for comment. Mertis simply looked at the reporter through the ragged hole in the screen door as she deftly rolled herself a Prince Albert cigarette. She never took her expressionless eyes off of his, even as she ran her tongue along the side of the roll-your-own to seal it. Lonnie stood on the porch with the reporter and said he blamed the Pentecostal Church for leading Mozelle astray. "Iffen they never had a-washed her har and dressed her up that day, she wouldn't a-took to foolishness." Lonnie was referring to a day when Mozelle was five years old and one of the Pentecostal churches rounded up the needy and made an entire Saturday of cleaning them, grooming them, feeding them, and teaching them to pray.

The educated city-boy reporter made the mistake of trying to reason with the uneducated Lonnie. The interview ended abruptly when Lonnie told him that he didn't know his ass from third base and yelled for Mertis to bring him his chain saw. The reporter didn't wait to see why Lonnie wanted his saw. As his Pinto left a dust cloud in the never-to-be-swept yard, in the rear-view mirror he saw Mertis come out the door dragging the fifty-pound chain saw; the Prince Albert hung out of one side of her grinning mouth.

"Well, I don't believe Mozelle ever did a thing that was morally wrong," defended June Faye. "Things ain't always what they look like." She picked up several small boxes to wipe under them and continued, "If somebody don't order cereal soon, the weevils is gonna enjoy an entire 'Variety Pak.'"

"Speaking of variety," said Henry Moss, "I always wanted to know if it was true what they say about slant-eyed women."

"You could ask ole One-Arm Arnold," offered Pete Brown. "He was there the night the Pink Cloud got raided."

"They say he was running down the 411 trying to pull his britches up with that one arm when he finally realized why he was having such a hard time. He'd left his britches in the room and was trying to

pull up a little ole pair of fuchsia silk lounging pyjamas that wouldn't even fit over his knees!"

The Grille had grown quiet to hear Pete's story, but now was filled with laughter and racy remarks. June Faye pretended to be piqued and sidled over to the jukebox, inserted a quarter with a J-shaped smear of fingernail polish on it, and drowned out the crude jokes with Conway Twitty offering himself as "a man with a slow hand, a lover with an easy touch."

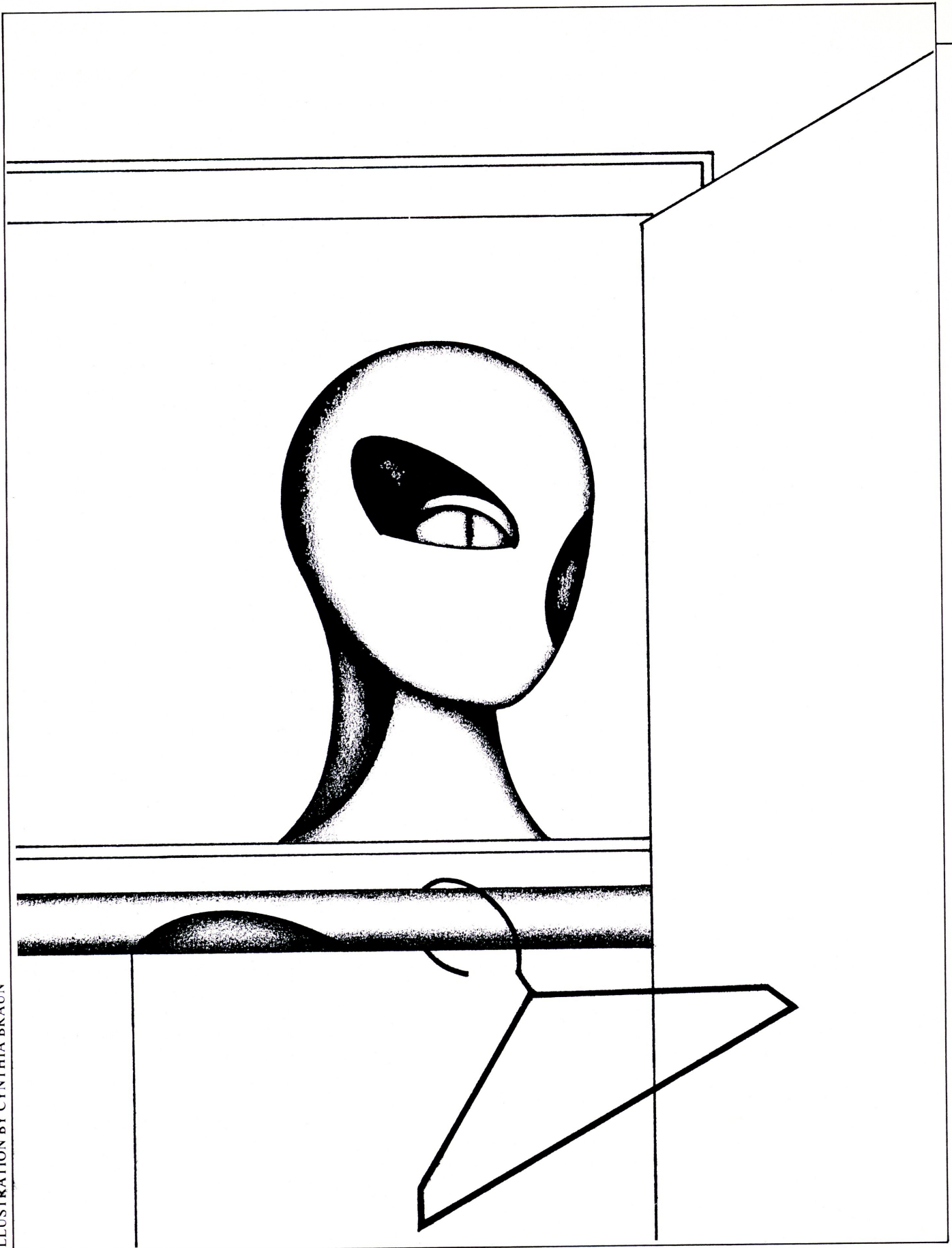
The rain had stopped. The breakfast crowd was stirring to go. They had jobs or sport awaiting them. June Faye, who had to start getting the lunch buffet ready, was already paper-clipping the day's luncheon special in the menus: turnip greens w/ham hocks, sweet potato casserole, chicken and dumplings, iced tea—banana pudding—\$2.95.

Sammy Dunn, anxious to win the attention back from Pete Brown before everybody left, said rather hastily, "She wore a different colored outfit for every show. All of 'em tight and no bigger than a bikini bathing suit. Silver shoes that glowed in the dark. And when they shot her out of the cannon she went sailing out across the midway waving sparklers in her hands."

"Sounds like a Baptist rapture," said Pete, determined to get the last clever line in, as he threw two quarters down on the table for June Faye and left.

The men went their separate ways. June Faye finished with the menus and went to the restroom to take a break. Each of the bathroom doors at the Grille had two sets of signs. Originally there were only the silhouettes of 18th century heads—a George and Martha Washington-looking pair—to signal men and ladies, but after Bertha Bass walked in on Roy Driggers with his fly open, Bud Jenkins put the "Pointers" and "Setters" signs up, too. Bertha asked how in the hell was she to know the ponytail belonged to a man. June Faye lit her cigarette and stared in the mirror in the ladies' room. She hated herself for a moment when she thought of Mozelle flying through the night in iridescence, probably living with a lion tamer or flame swallower when all she had to look forward to was piling up on the sofa in a chenille robe to watch *Dallas* and Hank smelling like automobile grease and beer.

She fluffed her hair a little, vowing to get one of those new perms on her next day off, and freshened up her make-up, applying the rouge a little darker than usual, then she finished her cigarette and washed her hands. There were all of those pepper sauce bottles to fill before the lunch crowd came flooding in.



Mention the word *homosexual* in Auburn in any context, and you'll receive several responses; most likely, they'll range from "ooh, they're sick" to "f---ing queers, they oughta be shot." As a senior at Auburn, I've had numerous opportunities to hear those sentiments expressed. When I first came here, hearing people say those things shocked me, but looking back, I don't know why. I went to high school in a small town where I heard exactly the same things. For some reason, I expected college to be different. But I hear the same remarks today, and since I'm gay, they make me angry.

BEING GAY AT AUBURN

BY BOB WILLIAMS

As you might imagine, being gay in Auburn is not an idyllic existence. In a small southern town like this, relatively few people are openly gay, or "out." Being "out" means admitting to yourself, and to others, that you're gay. Because I've never tried to hide my homosexuality, I've been out ever since I came to Auburn. All my close friends know I'm gay, and it doesn't affect my relationships with them. I also live with two straight roommates; last year I lived with three. All of them know I'm gay. Unfortunately, many gay people can't be as open with their lives; people often get scared and start behaving obnoxiously when they find out someone is gay. Most people around here have no idea how many gay people are on campus. Is there really any need to say that gay people probably belong to every organization on campus, even fraternities and sororities? Anyone who doesn't realize he probably knows at least one gay person simply has no idea of the extent to which gay people compose society. The refusal to admit that gays exist has long been a major problem for gay students at Auburn.

Much has been written in the past four years about Auburn Gay Awareness, the gay student organization. Opinions regarding the organization range from favorable to not so favorable, even among members, but the fact remains that AGA is the only gay student forum in Auburn. AGA is an off-campus organization, not one chartered by the SGA. Opinion remains divided among AGA members as to its true function; whether it is primarily a social organization, or one whose purpose is to provide a voice on campus for Auburn's gay students. One can only imagine the resulting furor if AGA did receive a charter from the SGA and recognition from the university; the controversy over former president Hanly Funderburk's resignation would be nothing in comparison. Again, opinion of AGA members is mixed regarding university sponsorship and, indirectly, control of the organization. Ultimately, the question of recognition rests on the tolerance, or lack thereof, of members of the SGA.

Almost invariably, when someone finds out I'm gay, his first question is "What's it like?" I have never been able to come up with a ready answer; it's still not easy. I'm tempted to reply, "What's it like being straight?" For me anyway, asking such a question is like asking what it's like to have blue eyes, or brown hair, or anything else so much a part of you that you no longer think about it. I've known that I'm gay since I was twelve years old. Living for so long with the knowledge that you're gay can make you either totally accepting of the fact, or it can drive you crazy. I belong to the first category, largely because of the way I was raised. Ever since I can remember, my parents told me to do what I thought was right, regardless of consequences or outside opinion. I applied that principle to my homosexuality; I can't change it, so why worry about it? Some friends have accused me of not really being out, either because the whole world doesn't know I'm gay, or because I don't walk the streets of Auburn holding hands with another guy. Though I am not ashamed of being gay, Auburn, as a rule, simply is not tolerant of gay people, and I don't feel like getting harassed, verbally or physically, if it isn't absolutely necessary. I don't think public displays of affection are worth the abuse. When I came to Auburn, meeting other gay people for the first time was a new experience; a scary one, partly because it meant admitting to other people that I'm gay. That's the hard part; admitting to yourself that you're something society labels as perverted is hard enough, but it's another matter entirely to admit it to the rest of the world. Many people never do.

The question remains: what *is* it like to be gay? Well... it's keeping your head together, to convince yourself you're not what society thinks you are. It's agonizing for weeks, even months, over the decision to tell your best friend you're gay. It's having your parents force you to see a psychiatrist when they find out you're gay. Or it's also having your parents say, "So what? We still love you." Being gay involves going to the free movie to see *Tootsie* or *Victor/Victoria*, then bracing yourself for the inevitable "fag-got" comments. For a lot of people, it's living with a siege mentality; wondering if today's the day your parents or your boss find out you're gay and decide to take retributive action. But it's also buying a house with your lover of the past five years so you can settle down to live happily ever after. Finally, and most importantly, for me being gay involves having an extremely close circle of friends whom I can cry with, laugh with, and count on for anything. The friendships I've made at Auburn are perhaps the most valuable things I'll leave this place with.

One of the most ironic things I've seen at Auburn

is the ready acceptance of fads and trends which originated in the gay communities of America. Bette Midler was discovered singing in a gay bath-house. The first people to appreciate Joan Rivers were gay club-goers. Gay people wore bandanas long before students at Auburn started wearing them on every appendage. People in gay bars heard songs like "Gloria" and "Hungry like the Wolf" six months before those songs received mainstream radio air time. And where do you think those little "long in back, short in front" haircuts came from? Not Anita Bryant, that's for sure.

Unfortunately (or perhaps typically), the social aspect of gay life is the only thing most straight people think about when they hear the word "gay." Granted, some gay people live life as one continuous party. I enjoy going to bars and dancing; I'd be lying if I said I didn't. Like anything else, though, it gets really boring if it's done to excess. Middle America's image of gay people as promiscuous and irresponsible is shaped to a large extent by those who choose to live that way. Some point to gay bars as evidence of "moral degeneracy," but in the final analysis they're no different from straight singles bars. Go to Confetti, the Polo Club, or any other singles bar on a Saturday night in Atlanta and you'll see exactly the same thing you would at any gay bar. Gay bars, though, often serve as private clubs; many are. They're basically just an escape from the straight world; they're places where gay people are free to be themselves.

Giving an account of four years of gay life in Auburn isn't easy; how do you put down all the experiences and feelings you've had? Ultimately, I hope I've managed to give some idea of what life is like for gay students at Auburn; of course, if seven other students had written articles on this subject, the magazine would have received seven different versions. I've dealt with being gay in my own way. Everyone does it differently. I hope this essay has helped somewhat to alleviate the seeming remoteness of gay students at Auburn. Masters and Johnson assert that any 10 percent of a given population is gay, which means that there are about 2000 gay students in Auburn. We all have to live together. Perhaps those of us who comprise an estimated 10 percent of the population should be treated with more respect.

**A string of fish
suffocating
at the end
of a fisherman's grin.**

Bill Meredith

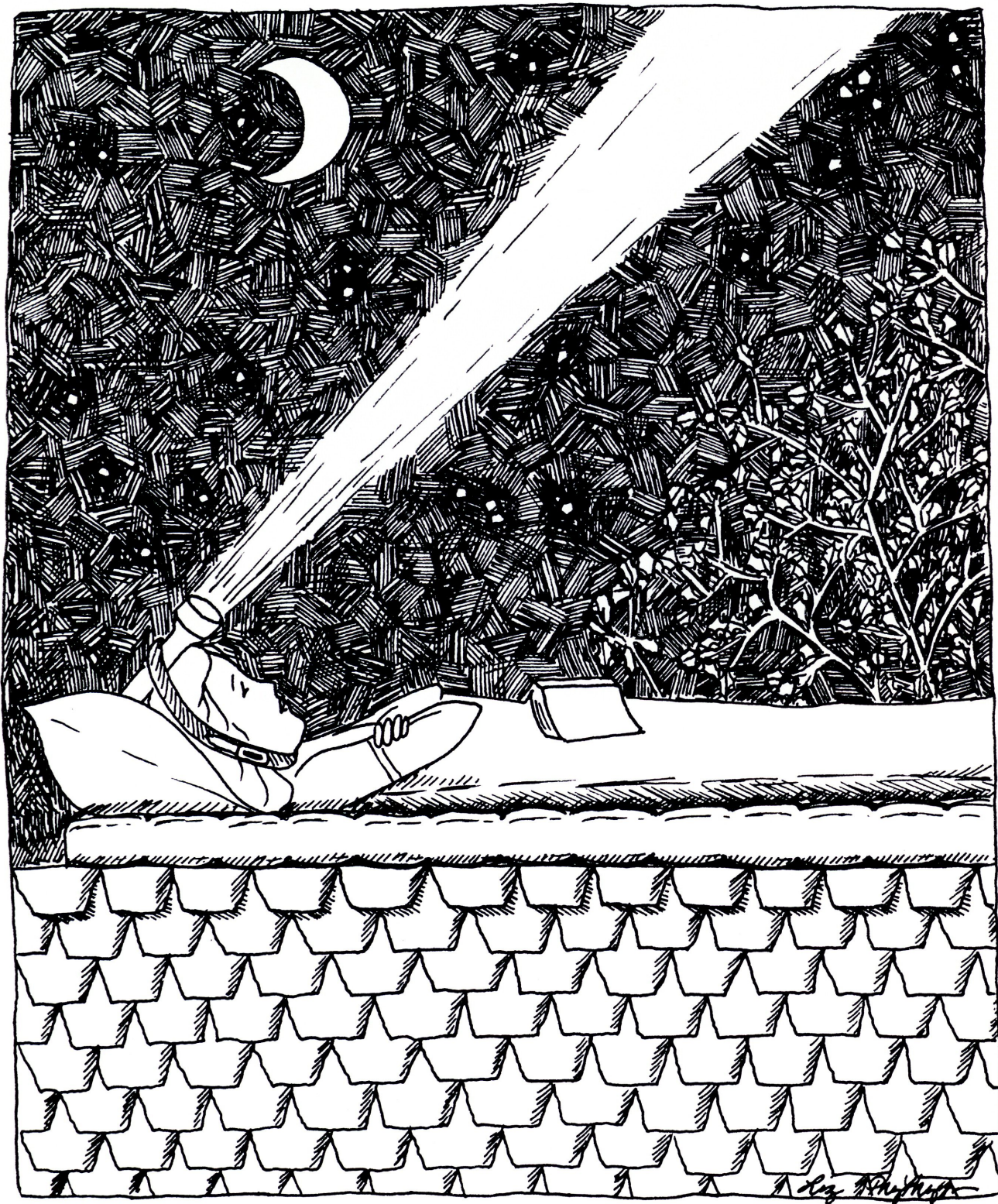


Morning

I would have held you there,
 where light swelled our windows,
 where brown boards poured back
 light and ficus leaves, where
 swedish ivy trailed along
 the panes. In mornings
 while you slept (for nights
 were yours and mornings
 mine) I would have tiptoed
 to your door, pulled shut the door,
 stopped it short of slamming,
 lest door and morning draft
 should shock the stillness.
 Silently, I would have cursed
 the jays, who cursed, less quietly,
 the feuding squirrels.
 I would have brought my pitcher
 to the window, taking care,
 while you slept, that greening

would go on. My feet, bare
 on boards, would have blended
 with light and ficus leaves
 in bright reflection.
 I would have rocked in sunlight,
 in the bright chair, under
 the weeping fig; I would have paused
 at the odd plunk of a clumsy
 wasp against the screen.
 Safely, I would have contemplated
 failure; while you slept
 I would have come to some
 consideration of myself,
 of my suspicions. I would have
 wondered, my feet brushing
 mere boards, at the swell
 of safety in that bright chair,
 at your sleep behind the door.

Margaret Renkl



CRICKETS

BY STANLEY SHELEY

Ramona looked up from her diet book and looked at her dog, George, who was licking himself in the corner.

"Be quiet," said Ramona. She waited, and when the dog didn't stop, she put down her book and got off the bed.

"Alright, get out," she said. "Get out," and she slid her foot across the carpet, pushing George with it, but the old dog evaded her, climbed over her foot, so she grabbed him *quickly* and put him outside in the hall.

Back on the bed, Ramona lay reading.

Carrots, raw	4 ozs	25
Carrots, cooked	4 ozs	36

Because you use oil when you cook them, thought Ramona.

Apples	1 med.	70
Apricots	1 lg.	50

Ramona heard George's dog tag start clinking viciously outside of the door. Apparently the dog was scratching himself.

She put the book down on the bed and looked at the ceiling, yawning, her eyes fixed on a very small, very red circle that was not really on the ceiling—and Ramona knew this—but was in her mind or her eye.

"Ramona." Her Aunt Kay opened the door. "Have you got the *TV Guide*? Your mother said she saw you with it."

"David has it," said Ramona. "It's in his room." There was always something. You couldn't do anything in this house; you couldn't read, you couldn't think, you couldn't even just relax without someone bothering you. It would either be George making his dog noises or else somebody barging into your room—without knocking—and asking you stupid questions.

Her Aunt Kay's shadow left the room and the door creaked shut behind it. Now Ramona could hear George shuffling under the bed. And in a moment she heard the licking again. She rolled off

the bed and looked under it.

"George." She wanted to get him out of the room again, but when she was reaching to grab him he started to growl, and this frightened her.

"George, I mean it," she said and tried to grab him again, but his growl got meaner and she decided she wouldn't try anymore. It was funny: this dog would follow her almost everywhere but he would still bite her hand off without any hesitation.

Ramona decided if she couldn't get any peace up here in her own room, she may as well go downstairs and watch television. At least with the TV on, maybe everyone would be quiet. And she could keep George shut up up here. She only hoped her brother David wasn't down there, because he constantly bit his nails and she hated it.

When she went downstairs her Aunt Kay was watching television in her usual chair, a recliner, with a quilt over her lap and legs. Ramona's aunt was short and bulky and she had a chin just like Ramona's. Ramona knew their chins were alike, but she would not appreciate it if anyone ever said so.

The room was dark. There was only the TV for a light.

"What is this?" asked Ramona.

"The Heartland," said Aunt Kay. She had the *TV Guide* in her lap.

"Is it any good?"

"It's alright. It's pretty good."

A square dance was going on in the show and fiddle music was playing. Aunt Kay's hair was a little frizzy, like Ramona's, and though it was knotted down pretty good, some strands stuck up from the bulk, and now they seemed to move, or to dance, as the light of the TV changed intensity or moved.

Ramona lay down on the sofa. She had brought her diet book with her to read during commercials, but it was too dark in here to read, she knew, and she pushed it up under the sofa cushion.

On the TV there was a close-up of one of the fiddle players—a short, skinny man with a mustache. Once, Ramona had taken violin at school, in the

fourth grade, but only for about two weeks. The teacher, Mr. Sims, had declared that she was hopeless and suggested she withdraw. Her violin, he had said, sounded like a sick cricket. Ramona was certain that the fiddle player she now saw on TV had not had a teacher like Mr. Sims.

Ramona suddenly noticed that Aunt Kay's big toe was protruding from the quilt, and that what it was doing was curling and then uncurling, down and up, down and up. Aunt Kay's big toe was hairy and looked like a man's. The movement was distracting to Ramona and she wished Aunt Kay would stop it.

It seemed a small thing to ask. "Aunt Kay, would you stop curling your big toe? It's bothering me."

Aunt Kay looked over, frowning. "Everything in the world bothers you."

"Well, something like that is distracting when you're trying to watch TV."

Aunt Kay did not respond, but she did pull the quilt up over her toe.

I'll bet she's still doing it under the quilt, thought Ramona.

Ramona readjusted herself on the sofa and stared once more at the TV. Now there was a young man and a young woman on the screen, beside a tree, holding hands. The woman was pretty and the man was handsome. Ramona thought about the boys in her school, and several faces came to her mind. Boys were the whole reason she was on a diet. Personally she didn't care how much she weighed, but she knew that no boy worth having would want a chubby girlfriend, and Ramona earnestly wanted a boyfriend—preferably one with no bad habits. The couple on TV started kissing and Ramona wondered what it would be like to kiss someone on the mouth. She had never done that before with anyone, except herself in the mirror, and that didn't count.

Just as the scene on TV changed back to the square dance, a shrill whine started coming from the wall. Someone was taking a bath—probably her mother because her brother David hated baths and hardly ever took one, the slob. The sound was awful. If you turned the cold water on just a little more, the pipes wouldn't whine like that. Apparently her mother didn't know this, or she didn't care; nobody cared about anything.

Ramona plugged her ears with her fingers. She hadn't really been listening to the show anyway, and besides, this would give her a chance to try lip reading. On career day at school, she had gone to the program on Working With The Handicapped. Perhaps one day she would work with deaf children, teaching them to lip read, and she could tell them that it all started one evening when she had to lip read a TV show because her mother didn't have

enough sense to turn the cold water on just a little more.

Ramona saw her Aunt Kay's head turn quickly around, and then her brother David walked in the room. He was still wearing his baseball uniform and he looked like he was sweating. Great, thought Ramona.

"Hey, don't hog the whole sofa," he said, motioning for her to move over.

Ramona took her fingers from her ears and sat up on the sofa without saying anything back to her brother. Ramona didn't like to argue with David because he could talk a lot meaner than she could, and hurt her. Nothing she ever said could possibly hurt him though. He was totally insensitive.

David sat down on the opposite end of the sofa from Ramona. "Hey, what's on?" he asked.

"The Heartland," said Aunt Kay.

"Any good?"

"It's all right. It's pretty good," said Aunt Kay.

Ramona plugged her ears again, and looking at the TV, she noticed a fly, hovering around the screen. She wished that her brother would kill it. She had tried to kill flies herself before, but she had never been fast enough. Besides, it was probably David who attracted the fly in here in the first place. She looked over at him to see if he had noticed it—she knew that if he had, he would kill it because he liked to do things like that—but David was absorbed in twisting his neck. This was something he did sometimes after baseball practice; if his neck was tight, he'd put one hand behind his head and the other hand on his chin and start twisting his neck around until it cracked. The twisting was bad enough to Ramona, but the sound of the crack was hideous. She was glad her ears were plugged.

Well, she thought, at least he's not biting his nails.

Then David started biting his nails.

This was too much. Ramona took her hands weakly from her ears. The whining of the pipes had stopped, but it was replaced now with the obscene glub-glub-glub of the draining water. Ramona looked around the room: at the fly who was now crawling across someone's face on the TV, at her brother as he carefully bit off a cuticle and spat it on the floor, at her Aunt Kay whose big toe was once again sticking out of the quilt, curling slowly, involuntarily, like a low form of life.

Ramona grabbed her diet book and left the room.

On the staircase in the hall Ramona sat wondering where to go. She wanted to read, to muse, to day-dream without constant interruptions and small distractions . . . but it seemed as if that were too much to ask of her world: a world inhabited by dogs who licked themselves, and boring old aunts who curled

their hairy toes, and mothers who took loud, long baths, and nasty brothers who bit their nasty fingernails and cracked their nasty necks. She wondered how long her life would be this way, if she would ever learn to ignore the things that bothered her, and if she did learn, whether that would be good or bad.

Looking at the ceiling, Ramona heard her brother whinney at something he thought was funny on TV.

Thirty minutes later Ramona lay snuggled in a sleeping bag, reading her diet book drowsily above the chirps and buzzes of the night.

In the quest for a slimmer, more attractive figure, one should not ignore nutrition . . .

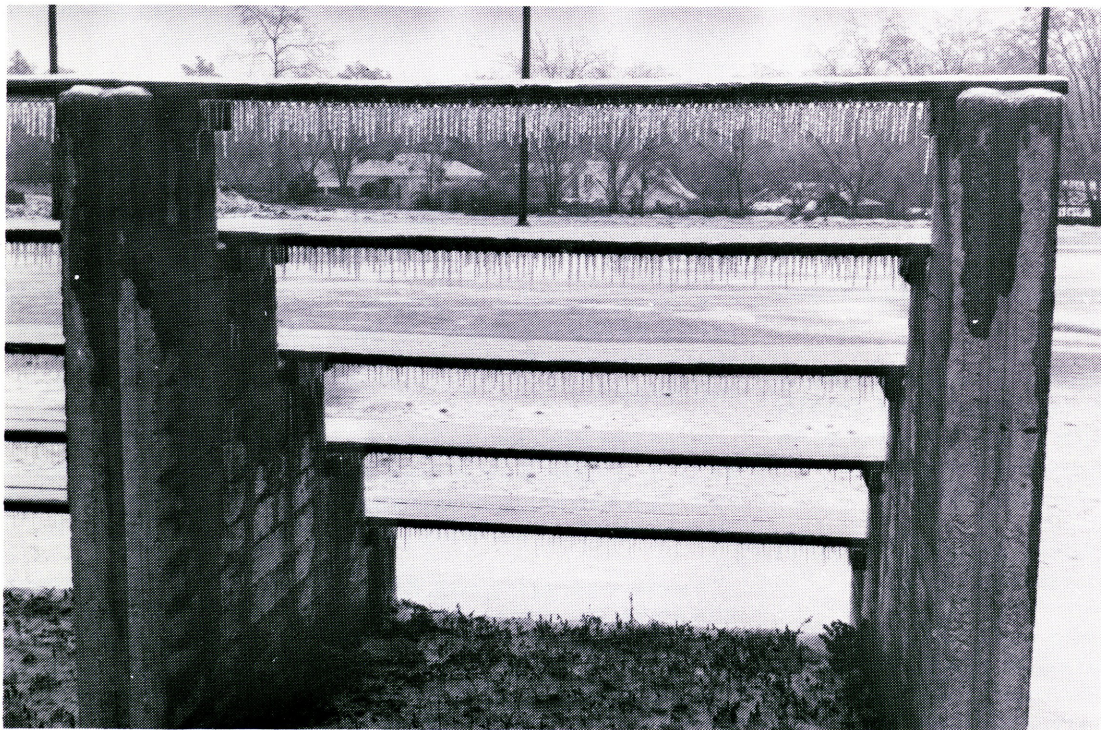
It had hit her all of a sudden to come up here; she didn't know why she hadn't thought of it before. This particular section of the roof was flat, and with the air mattress under her she was almost as comfortable as in her own bed. And here, neither George, nor her Aunt Kay, nor her mother, nor her brother could bother her. She had made sure of that when she pulled the ladder up after her. Right now the ladder lay on its side about four or five yards from

the sleeping bag. Just next to the sleeping bag lay an umbrella—the sky was clear but she had brought it just in case—and a wind-up alarm clock—Ramona did not like to sleep late.

She was reading her book by flashlight. She had strapped the flashlight securely to the top of her head, like a miner, with a belt that came around her chin. She had seen this done one time on TV and she was glad that she remembered it.

She had started reading her diet book from the beginning again, but the repetition was boring, and now she closed it. Resting her head back, she watched the beam of the flashlight shoot up through the leaves of the taller trees around her and then disappear in the dark sky; and she thought about how, in a billion or so years from now, that very same light would still be around somewhere, only older.

Coming up here was a great idea, thought Ramona. The wind felt cool and good on her face. Up here she could take it easy. She could think, and be, what she wanted. If only those stupid crickets would shut up.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA JOHNSON

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